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General Assembly

Tenth Emergency Special Session

Official Records

14th meeting
Friday, 20 October 2000, 3 p.m.
New York

President: Mr. Holkeri ..... (Finland)

The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Agenda item 5 (*continued*)

Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

The President: I give the floor to the Secretary-General.

The Secretary-General: I am glad to have this opportunity to report to the General Assembly on my recent mission to the Middle East. I am also grateful to you, Mr. President, for adjourning the proceedings on Wednesday to await my return to New York. My main purpose was to try to help the Israelis and Palestinians to resolve the current crisis by reaching an agreement with the following elements: disengagement, an end to violence and a return to normalcy; a resumption of the peace process; and the establishment of a mechanism to inquire into recent tragic events and ways of avoiding a recurrence.

To this end, over a period of 10 days, I had a series of meetings with Prime Minister Barak in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem and with Chairman Arafat in Gaza. During this period, I also attended the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, jointly chaired by President Mubarak and President Clinton. In addition, I paid a visit to Lebanon to discuss regional issues and the capture of three Israeli soldiers from the Shaba area of the occupied Golan.

Throughout my visit, the situation on the ground in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza was extremely tense. While I was in the region, more than 50 Palestinians were killed, and two Israeli reservists were lynched in Ramallah. Feelings on both sides were at a fever pitch and there was a real danger of the situation spiralling out of control. I found each side deeply mistrustful of the other's true intentions. Both were talking, privately as well as publicly, the language of war.

This is the backdrop against which my peace efforts were set. The situation had, in my view, reached the brink of the abyss. My primary objective was therefore to get the two leaders to address public appeals to their respective populations for calm, and to ask them to indicate some specific measures that they were prepared to take in order to de-escalate the tension. To this end, I was in frequent telephone contact with international leaders such as President Clinton, President Mubarak, President Chirac, Prime Minister Amato of Italy and the Foreign Ministers of Turkey, Norway and Germany. While in the region, I also met with the Foreign Ministers of the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom and the European Union representative, Mr. Javier Solana, as well as the Foreign Minister of Norway.

Unfortunately, it became apparent that the rapidly deteriorating situation on the ground, and the consequent hardening of public opinion on both sides, had made it impossible for the two leaders to make statements that could be interpreted as conciliatory. In close consultation with President Clinton and President Mubarak, I devoted all my energies to persuading Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat to attend

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the summit that was to be held at Sharm el-Sheikh. This involved further intensive shuttling between the two sides.

Neither leader was enthusiastic, and Chairman Arafat in particular expressed reluctance to go to Sharm el-Sheikh at a time when, in his words, his people were under military occupation, economic siege and repeated missile and artillery attacks. I was accordingly glad when, on the morning of 14 October, just as I was preparing to leave for Egypt, Chairman Arafat informed me on the telephone that he was accepting my appeal for him to attend the summit. During the 48 hours in Sharm el-Sheikh prior to the opening of the summit, I met the President and the Foreign Minister of Egypt and I had many telephone conversations, including with the Presidents of the United States, France, and Tunisia, the Kings of Jordan and Morocco and the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. I also spoke to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs of the United Arab Emirates, so that he could pass on a message to the head of State, as well as with senior Israeli and Palestinian officials.

The summit itself was in keeping with the atmosphere and events leading up to it. That is to say, it was clear that there was a lack of confidence between the two sides. Emotions were running high, and at times the proceedings became turbulent — especially in negotiating sessions at the Foreign Minister level. In procedural terms, the formal talks were focused largely on the agenda. But it was clear to all that this was a negotiation about substance. What in specific terms was to come out of the summit? Would it be possible to break the cycle of violence and return to the negotiating table? To put the issue in the starkest terms, would it be peace or war?

The Sharm el-Sheikh summit unfolded at two distinct levels. My senior advisers took part in the negotiating sessions of Foreign Ministers. Meanwhile, apart from the plenary sessions to open and close the summit, heads of delegation met on the margins, in intensive bilaterals. I myself took part in a series of meetings with the co-Chairmen, Presidents Mubarak and Clinton, and their respective foreign policy teams, and Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat, as well as with other leaders of the two parties. I also met with His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan and Mr. Javier Solana of the European Union.

My aim throughout was to support the efforts of the co-Chairmen to promote an outcome of the summit that met the minimum needs of the two sides, in terms of an end to violence and restoration of the status quo ante, a renewed effort to revive the peace process and the establishment of a mechanism to inquire into the tragic events.

At times, the gap between them seemed unbridgeably wide. But throughout, I believed that nevertheless there would be an agreement. For in the end, peace remains the only strategic option for Israel and Palestinians. The difficult questions are, how long will the journey take, and how hard will the road to peace be?

Here I would like to pay a heartfelt tribute to the extraordinary efforts of President Clinton. He stepped off an overnight flight and straight into action. Over the next 28 hours, the President worked continuously with the parties, late into the night and early morning. It is very largely due to his own personal efforts that President Clinton was able to announce on 17 October, at the end of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, that Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat had agreed on three basic objectives and steps to realize them.

What was agreed at Sharm el-Sheikh can be summarized as follows. First, both sides agreed to issue public statements unequivocally calling for an end of violence. They also agreed to take immediate, concrete measures to end the current confrontation, eliminate points of friction, ensure an end to violence and incitement, maintain calm, and prevent a recurrence of recent events. It was agreed that, to accomplish this, both sides would act immediately to return the situation to that which existed prior to the current crisis, in areas such as restoring law and order, redeployment of forces, eliminating points of friction, enhancing security cooperation and ending the closure of and reopening, the Gaza airport. The United States undertook to facilitate security cooperation between the parties.

Secondly, it was agreed that the United States would develop with the Israelis and Palestinians, as well as in consultation with the United Nations Secretary-General, a committee to undertake fact-finding on the events of the past several weeks and to seek ways to prevent their recurrence. The committee's report will be shared by the United States President with the Secretary-General and the parties prior to

publication. A final report will be submitted under the auspices of the United States President for publication.

Thirdly, it was agreed that, if we are to address the underlying roots of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there must be a pathway back to negotiations and a resumption of efforts to reach a permanent status agreement based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and subsequent understandings. President Clinton announced that, towards this end, the leaders had agreed that the United States would consult with the parties within the next two weeks about how to move forward.

In my view, the agreements reached in Sharm el-Sheikh are a vital first step back from the brink and towards a resumption of the peace process. It is essential that they should be faithfully implemented in their entirety by both sides. They may contain elements to which one side attaches more importance than does the other. But both parties need to demonstrate good faith — above all by their actions. It is not going to be easy. Mutual mistrust is deep. There are wounds in the families and communities concerned that may take a generation to heal. But we must move forward, painful though it is, so that the children and youth of today — angry and frustrated as they are — can have a better world to live in.

One of the lessons of the past few days is that there can be no lasting security without lasting peace. That is why we need to look beyond the violence and bitterness, the pain and the hurt, to a future in which Israelis and Palestinians can live side by side in a just and lasting peace.

This leads me, if I may, to end by addressing a few words to the wider international community, and to you, the Ambassadors of the Member States. It is only natural that the events of the past few weeks should arouse strong feelings. I myself have strong feelings about those events. I believe deeply that every life lost is a human tragedy, and that all human life is of equal value. My thoughts and prayers are with the families and communities on both sides that have endured such pain and suffering. I want to see the violence ended and the peace process back on track. That is why I went to the region at such short notice and with such uncertain prospects of success.

But I also believe that the General Assembly can make a real difference. We are not yet certain whether or not normalcy will be restored. We can only wait and hope. The next few days are vital. Meanwhile, we should remember that, as I said in Sharm el-Sheikh, words can inflame or soothe, and everyone needs a restoration of calm and quiet so as to create the best possible atmosphere for a resumption of peace talks.

Mr. Aboulgheit (Egypt) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have listened with interest to the Secretary-General's statement. His presence among us at this resumed emergency special session is of great significance. He spoke of the contacts he undertook during his last visit to the Middle East and the much-appreciated role he has played in trying to defuse the real crisis that threatens not only the occupied Palestinian territory but also the entire Middle East.

This emergency session has a very clear significance. It has been convened, first, pursuant to the inherent responsibility of the General Assembly on matters pertaining to the maintenance of international peace and security, as stipulated in the Charter. Secondly, this session is no more than normal procedure, given that the Security Council has ceased to fulfil its responsibilities on this important and crucial matter. Hence the importance of reverting to the general membership of the Organization, putting the matter before it and being appraised of its collective position regarding Israel's actions against the occupied Palestinian people.

What happened on Monday, 12 October, is no light matter, and here I speak of the Israeli bombardment of Palestinian cities with helicopters and tanks. Let me wonder, before this body, what would have been the reaction of the international community, and of the United Nations in particular, if these events had taken place between two neighbouring States, Members of the United Nations? What would the Security Council have done in the event of blatant aggression by one State against another?

The answer to that question lies in the Charter, and the Charter is quite clear on this matter. The precedents are also clear. The Security Council compels the aggressor to retract the actions it has taken — even if such actions were taken under the pressure of a military threat. The Council also compels the aggressor to compensate the victim of the aggression for its losses, to bring to justice those responsible for the violations and offences that occurred and to take action that would guarantee the non-recurrence of such aggression. The situation today

is one of shameful aggression by an occupying Power against a defenceless, unarmed people under its occupation. Since the State of Palestine is yet to be officially established and is yet to become a member of the United Nations, the present situation has to be dealt with under international humanitarian law — the Fourth Geneva Convention — in a clear manner. That Convention calls such behaviour on the part of an occupying Power a grave violation of the Convention. This Assembly must, therefore, stand up for humanitarian values, justice, law and human security, condemn Israel's actions and call on Israel to immediately cease this behaviour and these actions.

At the root of the bloody events that occurred in the occupied Palestinian territory in the past weeks is the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and peoples. This is the crux of the matter. We are awaiting the day when Israel relinquishes all occupied territories, including East Jerusalem, which have been occupied since 1967, restores to the Palestinian people their rights, and realizes that unless these elements are fully realized its presence in the region will not be accepted by a number of countries in the region and it will not have the legitimacy that it aspires to within the region. If Israel fulfils these conditions, it will then be accepted as a fully qualified member of the region.

It is with this in mind that we have decided to resort to the international community so it can tell Israel that the logic of procrastination in negotiations under whatever pretext is unacceptable, and that there will be no just peace unless Israel deals with the crux of the matter. The crux of the matter is the inevitability of Israel's withdrawing from all the territory it has occupied since 1967, including East Jerusalem, and accepting the return of the Palestinian refugees or compensating those who choose not to return and abandoning its aggressive behaviour, which depends solely on the logic of military power. Only then may Israel have the legitimacy it desires and aspires to, and only then will our peoples enjoy the end of the conflict that has ripped our region apart for the last half century.

Comprehensive, full and just peace in the Middle East has essential requirements that must be met. Foremost among these is the achievement of a final and just settlement of the Palestinian question. This settlement must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), as well as on the following points. The first is complete withdrawal by Israel from all the Palestinian lands in the West Bank and Gaza occupied since 1967. The second is restoration of full legal sovereignty over East Jerusalem, including Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The third is the cessation of Israeli settlement-building in the occupied territories, the dismantling of the settlements and the departure of settlers. It should be evident to everyone that the presence of this abnormal and deviant element — that is, the settlers and the settlements — is one of the factors leading to continued tension between the Palestinian and Israeli sides. Thus, if the solution to the problem is to endure, without any provocations or clashes, everyone must be mindful of the importance of rectifying the abnormal condition caused by the presence of settlers in those territories.

The fourth point is that Israel must desist from placing any unrealizable conditions or sovereignty-related restrictions on the emerging Palestinian aspirations to a legal status similar to that enjoyed by all peoples and Member States of the United Nations. As for attempts to place conditions and restrictions, they are all unacceptable and must not be allowed under the pressure of occupation or any other context.

The fifth and final point is securing neighbourly relations and cooperation between the Palestinian and Israeli sides in a manner that fulfils the equal interests of both parties in development, progress, sovereignty and mutual respect.

The invitation by President Mubarak to host the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit was but one more step among a number of vigorous efforts that Egypt has made with major partners who have had influence on the peace process in order to quell the victimization of the brotherly Palestinian people, end their suffering and reduce their human and material losses following an uprising sparked by the provocative visit of an Israeli political party leader to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The Israeli authorities could only deal with this uprising by using excessive military force, as was confirmed by Security Council resolution 1322 (2000).

Egypt hopes that the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings will stand up to the test of time — although we have heard today that eight Palestinians have been killed and forty-five wounded — even if they do not live up to the expectations of the Palestinian and other Arab peoples. We also hope that Israel will fully and sincerely implement all its

obligations under the understandings reached, foremost among which is the complete lifting of the siege of all Palestinian-controlled areas, cities and villages, including Gaza, and the withdrawal of its heavy weaponry from Palestinian areas.

What is needed from this resumed emergency special session of the General Assembly is to convey a clear message to Israel that genuine security cannot be achieved by sheer military force and that the use of such force to quell the aspirations and hopes of a people desiring dignity and independence will not benefit it in any way. Israel may succeed in delaying the attainment of hope, but it will never suppress it; Israel may try to hinder it, but it will never be able to prevent its achievement. Egypt, its people and leadership, will never rest until plundered Palestinian rights are fully restored to the Palestinian people.

Mr. Rodríguez Parrilla (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Palestinian issue is the key element of peace and stability in the Middle East. There will be no just and therefore lasting peace until there is an independent Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital. The path to peace inexorably involves the return of all the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan Heights, and the exercise of its inalienable rights by the Palestinian people.

For as long as the United Nations fails to assume the direct and irreplaceable responsibility assigned to it by the Charter and the will of the international community, and so long as the course of negotiations is determined by hegemonic and narrow domestic political objectives, peace will not exist. Nor will there be peace if the Israeli Government does not change its policy of colonial occupation and flagrant, massive and systematic violations of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people and allows the forces of the extreme right, which are opposed to the peace process, to impose their interests.

It would be difficult to be sure today that the peace process will survive the present crisis. After the current situation emerged from the provocation of the Israeli extreme right on 28 September, Israel attacked Ramallah and Gaza with missiles and targeted civilians with combat helicopters and tanks. Over 100 Palestinian civilians, including 30 children, have been killed and more than 3,000 wounded, of whom more than 1,000 have been children. Arab Israeli civilians have also been killed. The territories under the Palestinian Authority's control have been militarily blockaded and the Gaza international airport was closed.

The Israeli military and security forces have unleashed savage repression, unprecedented since the heroic intifadah, using excessive and unjustified force and flagrantly violating international humanitarian law, the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, international law and the Charter itself. The violence continues to this day and the most recent understandings reached in Sharm el-Sheikh seem to be precarious. The Government of Israel has the urgent responsibility to stop the escalation of the conflict and to re-establish the peace process.

The Cuban delegation is pleased to recognize the wide-ranging peace efforts of the Secretary-General and deeply appreciates the valuable report submitted by him to this emergency special session. Our country wishes success to the Arab summit to be held tomorrow at Cairo and is certain that it will make a substantive contribution to resolving the current crisis and conflict.

Episodes such as the current ones have taken place cyclically over the past 50 years as a result of the irresponsible partition of Palestine and the subsequent Israeli occupation of Arab territories. The General Assembly and the Security Council have discussed the Palestinian issue dozens of times, including at several resumptions of this emergency special session, and numerous resolutions have been adopted.

It can been affirmed with the utmost certainty that such resolutions, especially Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), chart the path to peace. And yet, they have not been implemented. The Security Council, which frequently oversteps its powers and resorts to force, sometimes in a hasty and even ill-considered way, has done nothing to date to implement the resolutions it has adopted, including its most recent, resolution 1322 (2000), which resulted from the massive and fruitful effort of the non-aligned caucus. The Security Council has not even been able to meet to consider recent events.

The current paralysis of the Security Council, due to the threat of veto of the United States, creates a double-standard approach to the work of the Security Council that is unacceptable and demonstrates the urgent need for a profound reform of that body, in

particular regarding the despotic and obsolete privilege of veto.

The tragic events that have taken place are therefore also the responsibility of the United States, whose historic and current behaviour, subject to electoral vicissitudes, actually serves as a cover and shield for Israeli acts and policies and prevents the Security Council from acting while presenting itself as the great mediator and advocate of peace. Peace will not be possible until the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council are implemented.

The international community can no longer remain silent. We have followed with a deep interest the procedures for the convening of a special session of the Commission on Human Rights; the report of the Special Rapporteur, including the results of his visit from 11 to 15 October 2000 to the occupied Palestinian territories; and the deliberations and negotiations that led to the adoption yesterday in Geneva of an important resolution co-sponsored and voted in favour of by Cuba.

It was significant and useful that the Commission on Human Rights, which is frequently manipulated and selective, acted properly in spite of the remarkable change observed in some of the speakers, who were reluctant to describe the situation as a massive, flagrant and systematic violation of the human rights of the Palestinians, whereas they are usually militant and outraged in judging the developing countries, and also in spite of the negative votes of those who frequently prescribe humanitarian intervention.

The resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly is fully justified, not only because of the neglect and silence on the part of the Security Council but also because of the urgent need for the General Assembly to recover the broad powers vested in it by the Charter and fully exercise the authority that derives from its universal composition and democratic procedures.

The Cuban delegation is convinced that only a clear message of condemnation of the inhumane actions of the Israeli forces and an objective and immediate investigation of events, as well as international action to bring about negotiations on a fair basis, can now save the peace process.

Mr. Lavrov (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The drastic aggravation of Palestinian-Israeli relations underscores once more the necessity of reaching a stable and comprehensive political settlement in the Middle East.

From the onset of the clashes, Russia has been making active efforts aimed at stopping the escalation of violence and normalizing the situation. Mr. Igor Ivanov, Minister for Foreign Affairs, has been in constant contact with the leaders of the Palestinian National Authority, Israel and Egypt, as well as with another sponsor of the peace process, the United States.

When it became evident that the situation was worsening, on the instructions of the President of the Russian Federation our Minister for Foreign Affairs of Russia went to the Middle East to hold emergency consultations with the parties concerned and with the United Nations Secretary-General, with the purpose of finding ways out of the crisis and creating the necessary conditions for the renewal of the Palestinian-Israeli talks.

Subsequent arrangements achieved at the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting inspire hope that it will be possible to stop the bloodshed and stabilize the situation in the Palestinian territories and in the region as a whole. The most important thing now is to take practical steps directed at the fulfilment of the obligations assumed by the parties and to ensure the impartial and objective work of the fact-finding commission in order to exclude the possibility of such tragic events recurring in future.

Moscow is firmly counting on the leaders of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority to manifest their political will and to do their best to normalize the situation, which remains extremely tense and dangerous. The implementation of the arrangements concluded in Sharm el-Sheikh would contribute to clearing the path to the resumption of the peace process in the Middle East. Russia is convinced that there is no rational alternative to talks. A constructive dialogue is the only way to achieve a comprehensive and just settlement in the region on the basis of the existing resolutions of the Security Council.

The current crisis has highlighted the interdependence of different aspects of the Middle East entanglement and the necessity to move to a settlement on all the negotiating tracks — Palestinian, Syrian and

Lebanese. It is evident that any attempts to break this interdependence will lead only to additional aggravations. That is why now, while striving to put an end to violence and normalize the situation, it is also necessary to work out the mechanism for subsequent talks. As a sponsor of the peace process, Russia is resolved to continue acting in accordance with the mandate of the Madrid Conference and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). On that basis, Russia is open for cooperation with all countries interested in establishing peace and stability in the Middle East. The Russian Federation deeply hopes that the forthcoming summit meeting of Arab States in Cairo will affirm a final choice in favour of a peaceful future for the Middle East.

For now, it is important to apply joint efforts in order not to give the enemies of peace a chance to undermine the peace process. The international community should concentrate its attention on establishing a favourable political atmosphere for the achievement of a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

Mr. Chowdhury (Bangladesh): My delegation thanks you, Mr. President, and the Secretariat for resuming at such short notice the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the item "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian Territory". The incidents that the world has witnessed since 28 September 2000 in occupied Palestine are shocking. The situation in the region has once again become volatile.

At the outset, our special tribute goes to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his leadership and commitment and, above all, the initiative he took in bringing about the emergency summit at Sharm el-Sheikh on 16 and 17 October 2000. We appreciate the efforts made by President Clinton and President Hosni Mubarak before and during the summit to stop violence in Palestine. We know that the process of reconciliation has started and that Palestine and Israel have agreed on an accord to end the three weeks of bloodshed in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. While we welcome this development, we are only too aware that we have to be vigilant and cautious, for on the one hand there is an armed aggression with helicopter gunships and armoured vehicles and on the other hand there are people fighting for their inherent rights — the unarmed people of Palestine.

Twenty-six years ago the Father of our Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, standing at this rostrum, spelled out in clear terms Bangladesh's unequivocal support for the just and legitimate cause of Palestine and peace in the Middle East. As a nation we had to suffer the depredations of occupation. For nine months we had to fight our liberation war, during which 3 million lives were lost and 250,000 of our womenfolk were dishonoured. It is therefore only natural that our heart heaves with the people of Palestine and that our sentiment goes out to them, and indeed it shall continue to do so until a just and lasting peace is found. The present Government, headed by our honourable Prime Minister, Sheikh Hasina, daughter of the Father of the Nation, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, remains committed in upholding our unflinching support to the Middle East peace process and to the people of Palestine.

On 3 October 2000, we deliberated in the Security Council on the prevailing situation in the region. My delegation made a statement in that meeting expressing our deep concern at the escalation of violence in the occupied territories and the use of excessive force against Palestinian civilians by Israeli troops, resulting in heavy casualties. This is most tragic and most uncalled for. We strongly condemn this. When the Middle East peace process reached a crucial stage, an Israeli leader's calculated provocation threatened to put the whole process in jeopardy.

We extend our heartfelt condolences to the families of all those killed and wounded in the recent violence. We also call for an appropriate inquiry into the events, including possible violations of the Geneva Convention. We must ensure that those responsible are brought to justice. We urge all parties to act with utmost prudence and restraint, to refrain from acts of provocation and to make all efforts to restore calm.

During the course of the last few weeks, we have witnessed a series of acts of repression unleashed by Israeli forces on the unarmed civilians of Palestine. Even children could not escape the repression. The world has witnessed this tragedy. The terror-stricken image of 12-year-old Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra, before he was brutally shot dead, should call out to the conscience of the international community.

We believe that the cycle of violence in the region can end only through a just and comprehensive peace agreement based on the relevant United Nations

resolutions and the various international agreements signed between the parties concerned in the Middle East. In this connection, we emphasize the need for immediate and full implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the recently adopted resolution 1322 (2000).

Bangladesh reiterates its total support for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent State with Jerusalem as its capital, and the right of the Palestinian refugees to return to their ancestral homes to live in dignity and honour. We urge Israel to refrain from all activities, including the building of new settlements in occupied Arab territories, that seek to alter the religious, political and ethnic character of these territories.

In conclusion, Bangladesh reaffirms that the United Nations has a permanent responsibility with respect to the Palestinian and Arab territories under Israeli occupation until a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement is reached.

Mr. Hasmy (Malaysia): Mr. President, my delegation is grateful to you for reconvening this tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the item "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". This special session is most timely, indeed, in the light of the grave situation obtaining on the ground. We are equally grateful to the Permanent Representative of Iraq for requesting, on behalf of the member States of the Arab League, the resumption of this emergency special session. That request was supported by the Chargé d'affaires of South Africa, in his capacity as Chairman of the Coordinating Bureau of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries, to whom we also express our appreciation.

My delegation expresses its gratitude to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his important address just now, which is pertinent to our consideration of the subject. We are pleased with his active participation in the emergency summit meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh. This demonstrates the Secretary-General's serious concern over the grave situation affecting human security, as well as international peace and security, arising from the conflict. His participation clearly manifests his readiness to utilize the institution of the good offices of the Secretary-General in situations that warrant his personal involvement. It also underlines, in an important way, the continued relevance of the United Nations in the efforts towards finding a peaceful settlement of the Middle East conflict.

Malaysia has always believed that it is right and proper for the United Nations to be concerned and involved in the situation in the Middle East, including the question of Palestine. This Organization and its Member States cannot afford to be neutral in the face of the continued blatant violations of the rights of the Palestinian people living under occupation, of which the current onslaught against them is merely the latest manifestation of a consistent policy of harassment and intimidation pursued for decades. When human rights are violated, neutrality simply means condoning such actions, which is tantamount to penalizing the unfortunate victims.

As a member of the community of nations, Israel cannot continue to turn a deaf ear to the pronouncements of the international community, of which the latest was the resolution adopted by the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva, which Israel has rejected. For the continued credibility of this Organization, and all that it stands for, all of its Member States must observe and be governed by the same rules. There should be no exception.

My delegation welcomes the understanding reached a few days ago in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, between the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships, which addressed the issue of the immediate need to de-escalate the violence that has erupted in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. My delegation fervently hopes that the understanding reached in Sharm el-Sheikh will be implemented so that a modicum of normalcy will be restored as soon as possible. We commend the two leaders for the understanding reached and pay special tribute to the host, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, President Bill Clinton of the United States and His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan, as well as Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Mr. Javier Solana of the European Union, for their constructive roles in the Sharm el-Sheikh talks.

However, the understanding reached in Sharm el-Sheikh, while welcome, should not distract us from our consideration of why this resumed emergency special session of the General Assembly was called in the first place. It was called because the Security Council was

not able to follow up on its resolution 1322 (2000) in the light of the further deterioration of the situation on the ground for reasons that are well-known. It was called to enable the larger membership of the Organization to pronounce itself on the grave situation affecting the Palestinian population in the wake of the illegal actions taken by Israel in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem. This forum is not, as portrayed by some, an "Israel-bashing" session. No Member State of this Organization enjoys criticizing another Member State without any good reason. This emergency session is called for the purpose of pronouncing ourselves, singly and collectively, on how the Member States of the Organization view the situation and what ought to be done by the parties concerned, particularly Israel, the occupying Power, and by the international community. As a member of the community of nations, Israel should listen carefully to the pronouncements made in the Assembly and heed the call of its fellow Member States.

Many Members of this Organization, including my own country, await the day when we can all stand up here to praise Israel's good deeds. But until that day comes, I am afraid Israel must continue to stand in the dock of the court of international public opinion, distasteful though that may be to Israel.

The Permanent Observer of Palestine has movingly described the current sad situation in his homeland. I will not add to what he has already said.

To date, over 90 Palestinians have been killed — most of them innocent civilians, including children — and over 3,000 wounded as a result of the relentless use of deadly force by Israeli security forces. The image of 12-year-old Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra, who was felled by an Israeli bullet, as witnessed by the entire world, is one of the most heart-rending images of this conflict. The fate of the boy and his father summed up the plight of Palestinians living in the occupied Arab territories: caught haplessly in situations of violence and being subjected to the Draconian policies and practices of the armed forces of the occupying Power. As a member of the Special Committee of the General Assembly to monitor Israeli practices affecting human rights in the occupied Arab territories, I am all too familiar with the plight of people living under Israeli occupation. Malaysia mourns these senseless deaths and offers its profound condolences to the families of the fallen. We strongly condemn the actions of the Israeli security forces against defenceless Palestinian civilians in Palestine and the Occupied territories.

To any objective, unbiased observer of recent events, there is no doubt that there was disproportionate — indeed, excessive — use of deadly force against stone-throwing Palestinian civilians, who were mostly youths angered by the provocations and deeply frustrated after years of living under oppressive Israeli rule. Also to the objective, unbiased observer, there was not a shred of doubt that the premeditated and provocative visit of Likud Party leader Mr. Ariel Sharon to the Muslim holy site of Al-Haram Al-Sharif sparked the violence. He knew precisely what he was doing there and the likely consequences of his action. But instead of being blamed for his provocation, he has been staunchly defended and rewarded by an offer of a high cabinet position. It is difficult for the objective observer, much less a Palestinian, to appreciate the appropriateness of Israeli actions to defuse the explosive situation. The images tell the story, and the toll of the dead and wounded is eloquent testimony to the tragedy which we, the international community, cannot ignore.

My delegation calls on the Israeli authorities to rein in the high-handed actions of its security forces and to bring to justice those directly and wilfully responsible for these tragic deaths. These actions constitute grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, which is applicable to all the territories occupied by Israel since 1967. This Organization has a clear responsibility to put an end to violations of the Convention, as well as to ensure the safety and protection of civilians, especially of innocent children. We should strongly support the immediate establishment of an impartial and objective inquiry into the recent tragic events so that all appropriate actions can be taken by the parties concerned to address this highly contentious issue and to prevent a repetition of these incidents. This is an essential step that must be taken towards normalizing the current highly tense situation.

A just and lasting peace can be achieved only with the complete withdrawal of Israeli armed forces and illegal settlers from all Arab and Palestinian lands occupied since 1967, including the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the occupied Syrian Golan. The people of Palestine have the inalienable right to establish an

independent and sovereign State of their own, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its undisputed capital. We therefore once again call on Israel to comply with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1322 (2000), and all other relevant resolutions.

Surely every reasonable Israeli must realize that a policy of continued hostility and confrontation is a recipe for future disaster. Israel cannot reasonably expect to keep an entire people — proud and resilient as the Palestinians are — under subjugation for ever. It is in Israel's own self-interest to restore calm as soon as possible and to resume in earnest the peace process that will lead to a final settlement of the Palestinian issue within the context of a comprehensive and just peace in the Middle East. It is in its own interest to pursue policies that will lead quickly to an independent, sovereign home for the Palestinian people. The investment made for peace over the years must be saved, and serious efforts must be made to salvage the peace process. This is the ardent hope and expectation of the international community.

Mr. Baali (Algeria) (*spoke in French*): The General Assembly is convened in special session today to consider the particularly serious situation of the Palestinian civilian population, which has been subjected in the course of the last few weeks to unrelenting and repressive attacks by the Israeli occupying forces. At the request of Arab countries and the countries of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Security Council held an urgent meeting at the beginning of this month to discuss this very issue. After a debate in which the international community was unanimous in denouncing and demanding an end to the repression, the Security Council adopted a resolution on 7 October in which it condemned the use of excessive force against Palestinians. That resolution also demanded that Israel, the occupying Power, adhere scrupulously to its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

Despite that universal condemnation, Israel decided to do what it has always done in the past: to ignore the will of the international community as expressed in the latest Security Council resolution and as expressed over many years in the General Assembly and the Council. The repression did not end; in fact, it has continued and worsened. Dozens of Palestinians, including schoolchildren — whose lifeless bodies have been shown in all the world's media — were felled as cameras rolled, their bodies ripped open by Israeli bullets, while they had nothing with which to protect themselves from the killers but their naked fists and frail chests. Today, as I address the Assembly, dozens of Palestinians are falling on the field of honour, victims of the unbridled use of force by Israeli soldiers. Worse yet, while every effort was being made to try to stop the repression and bring back calm and safety, the occupying authorities decided to escalate the violence by shelling with impunity the offices of the Palestinian Authority, wounding dozens of people and administering what may well be a fatal blow to the peace process, which today is in tatters.

Faced with that disproportionate war — but can we even speak of it as war when the stones thrown by young protesters are met with Israel's combat helicopters, warships and sophisticated weaponry? — and faced with the serious risk of general conflagration that this war entails, efforts were redoubled in the last few days to try to put an end to repression and the massacre of the civilian population, and to make possible a return to a situation of calm that would be more propitious to the resumption of negotiations.

In this regard, we should pay a well-deserved tribute to the President of Egypt, Mr. Hosni Mubarak, for all his efforts, as well as to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, who took the risk of going to the tormented region of the Middle East and who, with courage and determination, worked successfully to bring the two parties together and tried, patiently and doggedly, to find a way to restart dialogue. The full and extensive report the Secretary-General has just presented to the Assembly shows the immensity of the task he had to carry out in a region where wounds are still fresh and where emotions are very hard to contain and control. The situation of the Palestinian people is tragic, and its list of martyrs grows longer with each passing day. That report is an eloquent testimony to the fragile nature of the situation, which could explode at any moment and put us on the path of no return.

The Secretary-General's involvement in easing the tension marks the return of the United Nations to the process of settling the Middle East problem, a process in which it had long been marginalized — unjustly and unacceptably. Algeria welcomes this, and is gratified also at the involvement of the European Union, which we have constantly encouraged to play a more active role in the Middle East.

Now we must ensure that the measures agreed upon by the parties to the conflict are speedily and fully implemented. Similarly, Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000 must be immediately implemented. Here, it is crucial that the use of force and of weapons against unarmed Palestinian civilians cease, that Israeli security forces be withdrawn completely and as soon as possible from Palestinian towns and villages, and that the blockade imposed on the Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, be fully and finally lifted.

It is also imperative for Israel, the occupying Power, to respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, and to cooperate without reservation or restriction with the investigative mechanism agreed upon by the two parties, for whose establishment the Security Council, in its resolution 1322 (2000), stressed the need in order to carry out a speedy and objective inquiry into the tragic events of recent weeks with a view to preventing a repetition of similar events.

Finally, it is also imperative, when conditions permit, that the peace process be resumed with a view to reaching a just and final settlement of the Israeli-Arab conflict based on international law and on respect for the principle of land for peace, and predicated on the full realization of the national rights of the Palestinian people, including its right to establish an independent State of its own with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. But a just and comprehensive solution to the Middle East problem requires that Israel scrupulously respect the territorial integrity of Lebanon and abandon its remaining enclaves there, and that it withdraw completely from the occupied Syrian Golan Heights.

The tragedy in which Palestinian civilians have been swept up demands that the Assembly, which over the years has consistently reaffirmed its support for the just cause of the Palestinian people and for its inalienable right to self-determination and independence, once again shoulder its responsibility towards that people, whose homeland is still occupied and whose rights are still trampled underfoot. The Assembly must use all its political and moral authority to ensure that this unspeakable ordeal comes to an end and that justice and right finally prevail at the turn of this new millennium.

Algeria is more than ever convinced that peace is a strategic choice, and we therefore remain firmly committed to a peaceful, just, lasting and comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict, at whose core clearly lies the Palestinian question. We wish here to express our profound sympathy with the families of the martyrs who have fallen victim to Israeli repression, and our full support and active solidarity with the Palestinian people, our brethren, in its combat for freedom and dignity.

Mr. Samhan (United Arab Emirates) (*spoke in Arabic*): I have the privilege, on behalf of the delegation of the United Arab Emirates, to convey to you, Mr. President, our appreciation for your having convened this resumption of the tenth emergency special session because of the escalation of the grave crimes perpetrated by the Israeli Government against the Palestinian people. Our thanks go also to the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, for his statement earlier this afternoon, which very clearly set out the political factors of the very serious situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, as well as the potential consequences of that situation for regional and international peace and security.

Over the past three weeks, the international media have been depicting very sad events — the reckless murder of defenceless Palestinians — and images of deliberate, arbitrary destruction of Palestinian property and infrastructure by the Israeli war machine, causing the martyrdom, to date, of more than 160 Palestinians and the wounding and maiming of thousands. This amounts to an undeclared war waged by the Israeli Government with the goal of exterminating the Palestinian people, and thus of consecrating the occupation of their territory in the framework of a policy of imposing the status quo by force.

In Security Council resolution 1322 (2000), the Council called upon Israel, the occupying Power, to put an end to all acts of excessive force and provocation against the Palestinian people. But unfortunately, rather than implementing that resolution, the Israeli Government has continued its past habit of defying the relevant United Nations resolutions, and has persisted in escalating the violence and the deliberate bombardment and killing of innocent Palestinian civilians, particularly women and children. Moreover, they have given free rein to heavily armed extremist Jewish settlers, under the protection of the Israeli army, to kill, to burn, to destroy and to loot the homes, farms

and other property of Palestinians. That is an unprecedented defiance of international humanitarian law and norms, of internationally binding resolutions and of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

Israel has refused to honour its commitments undertaken at the recent Sharm el-Sheikh summit, at which Israel was called upon immediately to cease the violence and end the siege against the Palestinian people.

Israel's lack of cooperation in agreeing to an independent international inquiry that would assign responsibility for the recent events in the Palestinian occupied territories is a clear indication of its direct and central involvement and responsibility. Those who have followed the events can clearly see that they were deliberate and planned in advance by the Israeli Government, starting with attempts to impose illegal and unjust solutions concerning the final status of the city of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and the fate of the Palestinian refugees during recent peace negotiations between the Palestinians and Israelis.

If we add to that the sudden and provocative visit by Mr. Ariel Sharon, whose aim was to desecrate the Al-Aqsa Mosque, and the excessive acts of aggression perpetrated against those who were praying at the holy site, we can see clearly how all of this has led to a great deal of frustration and sparked angry confrontations on Palestinian streets, shocking the international community in the process.

The United Arab Emirates holds the Israeli Government fully responsible for the negative consequences of its serious violations of the rights of the Palestinian people. We call on the international community once again, and on the United Nations in particular, to assume its historical, political and humanitarian responsibility to put an end to the present situation by bringing political pressure to bear on Israel, thereby prompting it immediately to cease its violations and to respect the agreements reached at Sharm el-Sheikh; by calling for the immediate withdrawal of all its heavy weapons and other arms from Palestinian cities and villages; and by putting an end to the siege and lifting all the closures that prevent the free movement of Palestinian citizens and keep them from their jobs, thus allowing for the delivery of medical and humanitarian assistance.

Also, Israel must immediately release all prisoners, those arrested in the course of the events and prior to them, in implementation of the bilateral agreements between the Israelis and the Palestinians and other relevant international agreements.

In this context, we would like once again to stress the importance of ensuring the transparency and comprehensive nature of the mechanism through which an inquiry will be conducted into recent events, as agreed upon at Sharm el-Sheikh under the auspices of the Secretary-General. Those responsible must be brought to trial, and the Palestinian people must be compensated for all the harm and damage they have suffered.

In conclusion, the United Arab Emirates reaffirms once again its absolute and full support of the Palestinian people in their trials and tribulations. It would like to stress the importance of an international mechanism to protect the Palestinians, based on the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Hague Convention and international humanitarian law, and is in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations and the principle of land for peace. This will allow the entire region and its peoples to emerge from a state of violence, tension and instability and create a situation conducive to the achievement of peace, security and sustainable development, so that the Palestinian people can realize their right to self-determination and to the establishment of their own state, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital.

Mr. Ben Mustapha (Tunisia) *(spoke in Arabic)*: We resume our meeting once again, within the framework of this emergency special session of the General Assembly, to consider the dangerous and volatile situation that has prevailed in the Palestinian territories since September last, when the leader of Israel's Likud party, under the protection of the authorities, violated Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

That incident triggered the deterioration of the political and security situation and aggravated the anger and tension of the population in the occupied Palestinian territories. The situation had been very tense and very frustrating, especially since Israel declared very clearly at Camp David its intention to use a policy of fait accompli in the occupied city of Jerusalem and not to attach any significance to the peace negotiations.

The occupied Palestinian territories are now caught up in a fresh spiral of violence and confrontation, with severe repercussions. Israel has used excessive force against Palestinian civilians who were demonstrating their rejection of Israel's policy of fait accompli, which has led to more than 100 casualties and to the wounding of 3,000 Palestinians.

At the same time, Israel has continued its usual policies of coercion and persecution against the Palestinian people in occupied East Jerusalem and other occupied Palestinian territories, in clear violation of the 1949 Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War.

There is a great deal of testimony from many sources on these Israeli practices. We would like to point out in particular what the Rapporteur on human rights said upon his return from a mission of inquiry to the occupied territories. He emphasized that the victims of Israel's coercive policies in the Palestinian territories have exceeded in number those who fell during the first four months of the 1987-1988 uprising of the Palestinian people. The Rapporteur also expressed his concern at the behaviour of certain Israeli settlers belonging to military militias.

Despite all these victims and casualties, the Palestinian side responded to the call of the international community, represented by the Security Council, the Secretary-General, the sponsors of the peace process, the European Union and many sisterly countries and agreed to help put an end to the deterioration of the situation in the occupied Arab territories.

Many news reports emphasize the respect of the Palestinian party for its obligations agreed upon at the last Sharm el-Sheikh summit. The Palestinian side has declared its intention fully to uphold its commitments and to stop all forms of violence in order to defuse tensions and to calm the situation. Regrettably, however, the Israeli side has suspended the implementation of its commitments. Israel has issued warnings and has set conditions in order to impose its will on the Palestinian people and to continue its siege of Palestinian territory.

Many Palestinians are falling victim not only to the Israeli forces but also to the settlers, who are working with the Israeli forces and are using weapons to attack the Palestinian population.

The prevailing situation in the occupied Palestinian territory is very volatile. We must not look at the situation from a security perspective only, but concentrate on the causes of the tension and confrontation. The Sharm el-Sheikh conference was a serious attempt to defuse the situation, and we hope that the understandings reached at the summit will lead to the rapid resolution of the situation on the ground and will put an end to the serious security situation there. This is an urgent request addressed to both parties.

However, the conference dealt with the results, not the causes of the conflict, as the situation in the Palestinian territory, which is still under Israeli occupation, is first and foremost a political matter, not a security issue. It is an unbalanced political situation that requires a political resolution to resolve all volatile issues within a comprehensive framework, as called for by the international community, within the context of international law and the relevant United Nations resolutions. If we are to end the confrontation and prevent it from recurring, therefore, it is essential for the international community to take up its responsibilities once again by emphasizing the basis of the peace process. All forms of prevarication must end if we are to achieve a true resolution of the Palestinian question that will guarantee the legitimate, inalienable national rights of the Palestinian people, prominent among which is the right to set up its own State with Jerusalem as its capital. There can be no comprehensive solution if Israel does not give up all the occupied Arab territories, including the Syrian Golan.

Once again, the international community is called upon to protect the Palestinian people in accordance with international law and norms, including those of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It is also called upon to redouble its efforts to bring about peace, to exert pressure on Israel to take its responsibilities seriously and stop prevaricating, and to demonstrate the political courage and will necessary to bring about a comprehensive, just and permanent peace.

Before concluding, I should like to express my full appreciation to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, for the efforts he made during the mission he undertook to the region. The fact that he took up his responsibilities in accordance with the Charter and contributed to ending the crisis shows the central role played by the United Nations in the maintenance of

international peace and security and in ensuring stability and peaceful coexistence between peoples, particularly in the Middle East. This is the first responsibility of the United Nations. The resolutions that it has adopted since the beginning of the crisis constitute the legal and political framework that establishes the basis for finding a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We call for the continuation of these efforts by the United Nations and request the General Assembly to remain seized of the matter.

Mr. Ling (Belarus) (*spoke in Russian*): The President and the Government of the Republic of Belarus were fully convinced that the General Assembly, as the most important body of the United Nations, could not remain passive in the face of the events that we are witnessing. In this context, I should like, first of all, to express my sincere hope that after the series of failures that we have seen, the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting will open up a new opportunity for revitalizing the peace process. We welcome the efforts of all the participants in the difficult negotiations in Egypt. Of particular significance for us is the fact that the United Nations was represented by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and that he was able to make an important contribution to the settlement process. Under the present circumstances, the withdrawal of Israeli forces and the establishment of a joint committee aimed at investigating the acts of violence and preventing their repetition in the future, should achieve the major goal, which is to stop the bloodshed in the Middle East.

Belarus strongly condemns any action that could result in further victims. We are convinced that the General Assembly, at this special session, will reconfirm the position that a comprehensive, just and lasting peace can be achieved only with the complete withdrawal of Israel from all Arab and Palestinian land occupied since 1967, including the city of Jerusalem and the occupied Golan. The establishment of an independent State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital, and the implementation of all international legal measures, including resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and other Security Council documents, are the only guarantees for lasting peace between Israel and Palestine. From our strategic perspective, we are convinced that there is no alternative solution. Support for the draft resolution submitted to United Nations Member States should provide a new, encouraging impetus to move towards this goal. Belarus does not share the view that the involvement of different bodies and institutions of the United Nations, including the office of the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the General Assembly, could create obstacles for future progress. The opinions and assessment of all United Nations Member States should be heard and taken into consideration.

We also welcome the recent steps taken by the Security Council in the light of the provocative actions of the leader of Likud Party, Ariel Sharon. The provisions of resolution 1322 (2000) should be implemented immediately. Belarus, together with the entire international community, expects the Security Council to be seized of this matter and to take all necessary steps to ensure that its decisions are put into effect.

Belarus, together with the entire international community, has witnessed with deep sorrow the deaths of dozens of people, including children, in the Middle East. In the context of the commitments made by our heads of State or Government during the Millennium Summit, all concerned should forget their political ambitions and guarantee appropriate protection and security for the people in the region of the conflict.

Mr. Wibisono (Indonesia): The tenth emergency special session has been resumed to consider the illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory at a critical and explosive moment in the Middle East. Recent developments on the ground in the occupied territories are a searing and grim reminder to the international community that the peace process, with all its promise and hope for a better future, is beginning to unravel, and the violence and bloodshed of past decades are tragically becoming the reality of today. In the past two weeks, the unconscionable use of force against the Palestinians has taken the lives of scores of unarmed civilians — in contrast to the handful of Israelis who have died — and shows the stark and brutal nature of the policies pursued by the occupying Power. No Palestinian town has been left untouched by the violence that is spiralling out of control. The deaths and material devastation in the occupied territories demand an international investigation and firm action.

It is of deep concern to my delegation that Israel continues to flout the numerous resolutions adopted by the emergency special session of the General Assembly

in accordance with resolution 377 A (V) of 1950. This is an unacceptable situation, for no country should at will reject the voice of the international community and, in the face of such condemnation, continue to take illegal measures with impunity.

The provisions of those resolutions are clear. Among other things, they reaffirm the position of Member States on the status of Jerusalem and the illegal Israeli settlements, while reiterating the *de jure* applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 and the need to comply with all relevant Security Council resolutions.

The occupied territories are bearing the brunt of untenable acts of aggression, such as blockades and military action. The international community cannot stand idly by in the face of such provocative actions. We therefore call upon Israel to withdraw its forces immediately and unconditionally from all Palestinian territory.

Peace will continue to elude the region so long as the Palestinian people are unable to fulfil their aspirations, including the right to self-determination in an independent homeland, with East Jerusalem as its capital. Indonesia, for its part, has consistently maintained that the peace process must be based on the full implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and on the land for peace principle. Any diminution of these basic requirements is doomed to failure. Furthermore, Israel should cease from taking action in contravention of past agreements and commitments. It is only in this way that mutual trust and respect will be fostered between the parties concerned to overcome the decades of policies of repression and occupation.

It is our earnest hope that the outcome of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit on 16-17 October 2000 will give peace another opportunity to take root and grow in the region. This calls for an immediate cessation of violence and the use of force in order that political wisdom prevail.

Furthermore, it is imperative for the Security Council, as the body charged with the maintenance of international peace and security, to take prompt and resolute action by not only condemning the excessive use of force against unarmed Palestinian civilians, but also by not failing to name the aggressor and the perpetrator of wanton violence. Even when confronted with escalating violence, the Council procrastinated, rather than taking firm action forthwith on the killings of the innocent Palestinians. This is in stark contrast to the Council's recent swift action in adopting a resolution when three humanitarian workers were killed during the tragic incident in Atambua.

Mr. Fall (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

In other words, there can be no justification for the Council to single out for immediate action a few situations in another part of the world, while hesitatingly adopting a resolution on a situation that was fraught with much more dangerous consequences for the region and beyond. For the United Nations, and especially the Security Council, to be judged, the criteria can only be based on the fairness and just treatment of all its members. Thus, military power and industrial affluence must never be used as the criteria for resolving national and international conflict.

Mr. Listre (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the end of last year, the international community observed the evolution of the peace process in the Middle East with cautious and hopeful optimism. The signing of the Sharm el-Sheikh memorandum of 4 September 1999 had given a fresh impetus to the negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Authority, and it made it possible to establish a frame of reference for the solution of pending issues regarding the final status.

In subsequent meetings in Oslo and in Camp David, the parties continued with that intense and constructive process of dialogue. Less than three months after the Camp David Summit, those positive prospects seem to have been reversed, and the fragile balance achieved at the negotiating table has been altered by violence on the ground.

The Argentine Republic has observed with grave concern and profound sorrow the acts of violence that have stirred the Palestinian and Israeli territories since 28 September. The Government of Argentina extends its solidarity to all the victims of these tragic events and to their relatives; we are referring both to the Palestinian and Israeli victims.

In light of the gravity of the situation, my Government, in the course of these weeks, has made urgent and emphatic appeals that every effort be made in order urgently to obtain a cessation of the confrontation, and it has also condemned the excessive use of force. I would like to emphasize that the Jewish and Arab communities of Argentina, summoned by

President de la Rúa to his office, have joined my Government's appeal for the prompt return of peace to the Middle East, showing the spirit of peaceful and harmonious coexistence of the two communities, and stating in a joint declaration their wish that the Jewish and Arab families live in a climate of peace and security in the Middle East, "one of the areas that have fashioned our age-old culture".

Fortunately, the parties heard the calls of the international community, of the Security Council and of the Secretary-General, and they met again in Sharm el-Sheikh on 16 and 17 October to reverse the deterioration of the situation and to recreate the conditions to put the peace negotiations back on track. May I say how pleased the Argentine Government is at the result of that summit meeting, as a result of which Israel and the Palestinian Authority have pledged to take concrete measures to put an end to the dangerous escalation of violence, to resume the peace process and to investigate the tragic events of the past weeks.

We recognize, and we are particularly grateful, for the role played in those negotiations by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan and by Presidents Clinton of the United States and Mubarak of Egypt. We also appreciate the efforts made by His Majesty King Abdullah of Jordan, by Mr. Javier Solana on behalf of the European Union and other leaders of the world and of the region so that that meeting could conclude on a positive note.

Argentina wishes to commend in particular Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat for having returned to the negotiating table. Their efforts give us renewed hope that peace will at last triumph in the region.

We are aware that it is, as yet, premature to consider that the peace process will indeed be put back on track. The road ahead for the parties is extremely arduous and complex, and the obstacles to be overcome are many and difficult. For this reason, my delegation wishes to call on Israel and the Palestinian Authority to persevere on the path of dialogue and to strengthen, through concrete actions, the necessary climate of mutual confidence, refraining from committing or tolerating acts of provocation, such as taking unilateral measures that could destroy the fragile balance on the ground.

I would like to reiterate that peace in the Middle East must, in our view, be achieved on the basis of the complete implementation, in good faith, of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the agreements signed by the parties over the years. Only in the framework of strict compliance with the provisions of those instruments can the delicate questions covered in the final status be resolved satisfactorily.

Argentina affirms the need to comply scrupulously with the obligations and responsibilities that stem from the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, dated 12 August 1949.

As we did in the Security Council on 3 October, I believe it is timely to reiterate on this occasion my country's substantive position with regard to this conflict. The Republic of Argentina has traditionally recognized the right of Israel to live in peace with its neighbours within secure and internationally recognized borders. Likewise, it recognizes the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, including the creation of an independent and sovereign State. The sooner these legitimate aspirations are enshrined in a treaty that recognizes them, the better it will be for international peace and security in this region that is so dear to our country.

The peace process in the Middle East has entered one of its most difficult stages. This is why Argentina believes it is necessary to act with the utmost prudence and not to allow emotion and distrust, however legitimate and understandable they may seem, to fuel the rhetoric of confrontation, opposition and blame. We also ask the parties to act with moderation in order to restore calm and relieve existing tensions. We ask them to return to the negotiating table and to continue to make progress on the path of agreement, through compromise and mutual understanding, in order to resolve this conflict in a just, lasting manner and to achieve genuine reconciliation among the peoples of the region.

Mr. Al-Ashtal (Yemen) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the outset I would like to extend my profound thanks to the President of the General Assembly for reconvening this emergency special session to consider the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. I would like also to extend my thanks to the Secretary-General for his successful initiative of visiting the region and contributing to the reduction of

tensions and the creation of the appropriate climate for holding the Sharm el-Sheikh summit.

This special session resumes its consideration of the situation in the occupied Palestinian territories at a moment when the confrontation between the Palestinians and the Israeli occupying forces has reached a climax. In the last few days more than 100 Palestinians, most of them children, have been martyred. The Palestinian people have been exposed to all forms of coercion and torture, including the deployment of Israeli tanks in their cities and the closing of the Gaza airport and the entry points to the cities. Therefore, it is not strange that the Palestinian people have resisted Israel, the occupying Power, which demonstrates every day that it does not want peace.

Indeed, the peace process has reached a dead end, because Israel has repeatedly shirked its responsibilities and obligations and continues to pursue its expansionist settlement policies. The present crisis erupted because of the notorious visit of General Ariel Sharon to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. This visit provoked the Palestinians — in fact, all Muslims — and led to the Palestinian uprising against the occupation in general. Things got particularly worse because this rash act found supporters and justifiers in the present Government of Ehud Barak.

Two weeks ago the Security Council met and adopted resolution 1322 (2000), which condemns all violent Israeli acts and calls for the establishment of a commission of inquiry to consider all these criminal acts. The Council resolution reflected the desire of the majority of its members, as well as the position of the international community and world public opinion.

Only yesterday the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva adopted a decisive resolution condemning the Israeli forces and calling for the establishment of a commission of inquiry to look into the violation of the human rights of the Palestinian people. Then there was the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, to back up the Security Council resolution and to reaffirm the importance of conducting an inquiry as a means of getting beyond this crisis and of resuming the peace process, which has stumbled so many times.

The General Assembly is called upon today to adopt a draft resolution that strengthens the position taken by the Security Council, as well as the efforts undertaken in Sharm el-Sheikh. It is aimed at getting Israel to refrain from committing any more aggressive acts against the unarmed Palestinian people and at creating the necessary conditions so that the peace process can be resumed on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). As is well known, these resolutions emphasize the importance of a complete and total Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967, including the Arab Golan. We look forward to this draft resolution being adopted as quickly as possible so that it can contribute to calming the atmosphere and so that we can move to another stage.

Mr. Wang Yingfan (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since late September, ongoing violent clashes and bloodshed have taken place in Jerusalem and the occupied territories. We express our deep concern about the continuation and escalation of the conflict between Palestine and Israel and about the resulting deterioration of the situation in the region. We condemn the use of force against Palestinian civilians and any violent acts detrimental to the Middle East peace process.

We have been shocked by the large number of civilian casualties, which have included women and children. We express our deepest sympathy to the families of the victims. The Chinese Red Cross Society is now working to provide Palestine with emergency humanitarian assistance in order to help wounded civilians.

We have always favoured the resolution of differences through negotiation and dialogue so as to achieve a political settlement of the question of Palestine. This is not only in accord with the fundamental interests of the countries of the region, including Palestine and Israel, it would also be conducive to peace and stability in the region and in the world as a whole. We believe that the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people, including the right to establish an independent State, should be restored. We also believe it necessary to safeguard the sovereignty and security of the relevant countries of the Middle East region. Only in this way will it be possible to achieve comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

We have always supported the negotiations for peace in the Middle East. We appreciate the efforts made at the Sharm el-Sheikh multilateral summit to de-

escalate the Palestinian-Israeli clashes and to resume the Middle East peace negotiations. We welcome the understanding reached at the summit. We greatly appreciate the fruitful efforts made by the parties involved, especially Secretary-General Kofi Annan.

Regrettably, however, violent clashes are continuing and casualties are mounting. The situation remains very tense. We strongly urge the parties involved to exercise maximum restraint, immediately to adopt effective measures to stop the violence and to refrain from saying or doing anything to prejudice the peace process. We hope that Palestine and Israel will continue to follow a flexible and pragmatic approach, resume peace talks as soon as possible and work to resolve the question of Palestine on the basis of the relevant United Nations resolutions at an early date so as to achieve definitive peace and stability in the Middle East.

We sincerely hope that the Arab summit will contribute to the peace process in the Middle East. China is willing to join the international community in an ongoing effort to advance the Middle East peace negotiations.

Ms. Wensley (Australia): The Australian Government is deeply concerned at the loss of life, injury and the damage to mutual confidence between Israel and the Palestinians that has occurred as a result of the violence in the West Bank, Gaza and Israel in recent weeks. After an encouraging period, when a final settlement to outstanding issues in the peace process appeared increasingly close, recent events have cast the shadow of a bleak future over Israelis and Palestinians alike.

In previous years, Australia has consistently questioned whether the emergency special session mechanism can in any material way be of assistance to the situation in the occupied territories. Our concern is particularly relevant now, when both parties are seeking to implement the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement to stop the deaths and injury. Direct negotiations between the parties themselves, in our view, provide the best prospect for putting a final end to the cycle of violence and returning to a process that can deliver a comprehensive agreement — an agreement that recognizes the right of the State of Israel to exist in secure, defined boundaries and the legitimate rights of the Palestinians to a homeland. It is imperative that the commitments made at Sharm el-Sheikh be implemented as soon as possible.

The peace process cannot be abandoned. There is no real alternative for either side to a negotiated settlement based on resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace.

Despite the severe blow of recent events, the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement shows that the leaderships of both sides remain committed to resolving the dispute. They deserve the support of their people and of the international community in their efforts to build a lasting peace and an opportunity to do so without being undermined by terror or by provocation. Australia has, like others, contributed funds for emergency medical assistance to help those in the Palestinian territories affected by the recent violence. We hope, like others in the international community, that the recent violence will act as a spur to encourage the conclusion of the peace process. I repeat, however, that peace and stability can be ensured only through a negotiated settlement between the two parties themselves.

Mr. Nejad Hosseinian (Islamic Republic of Iran): I would like to begin by offering the fraternal people of Palestine our most sincere condolences on the continued loss of life and the injury of Palestinian civilians inflicted by the Israeli forces in the occupied territories in recent weeks. The people and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Iran are enraged not only by the atrocities committed against the defenceless Palestinians, but also because some still try to defy world public opinion and to cover up or justify the perpetration of crimes against the Palestinians in the occupied lands.

The General Assembly has resumed for the fifth time this tenth emergency special session under the provisions of General Assembly resolution 377 (V), entitled "Uniting for peace". The Assembly is rightfully intent on fulfilling its responsibility in the face of the Israeli regime's continuing total disregard of the demands of the international community, as represented by this Assembly, with regard to the cessation of its illegal activities in the occupied Palestinian territories.

The resumption of this session is a clear indictment of Israel's intransigent policy of totally disregarding the rule of international law and the demand of the international community that it cease its

illegal actions and practices in occupied Palestine, in particular its recent campaign of terror against the Palestinians. The resolutions adopted at this special session in the course of the past three years have explicitly condemned Israel for failing to comply with the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the decisions of this Assembly. Moreover, the resumption of this session is promising in the sense that it demonstrates the determination of the general membership of the United Nations to follow up the Palestinian question.

While noting the efforts made by the Security Council leading to the adoption of resolution 1322 (2000), we regret the fact that it has not yet responded to the call to convene immediately a new meeting and to take action vis-à-vis the continued violence against Palestinian civilians. We hope that the Council will follow up its resolution 1322 (2000) and take steps to address the non-compliance of the Israeli regime with its provisions. We also hope that the tragedy unfolding in the occupied territories, shown partly on our television screens, will move those who try to obstruct the fulfilment of the Council's responsibility with regard to the Palestinian question.

At the present time, acts of provocation, the desecration of holy shrines followed by a campaign of terror, resort to violence against the peaceful protesters and the excessive use of force figure prominently among the illegal and criminal activities perpetrated by the occupying Zionist Power in the territories under its occupation. I do not feel the need to discuss here the ongoing oppression against the Palestinians. We have all seen the sad and tragic pictures of Palestinian children, adolescents and men being gunned down by the Israeli forces. Even today, despite recent efforts aimed at putting an end to violence against the Palestinians, the Israeli troops shot to death eight more Palestinians in the occupied territories.

The obligations of withdrawing the Israeli heavy weaponry and refraining from the use of excessive force against unarmed Palestinian civilians are yet to be fulfilled. Moreover, the Israeli army continues to restrict the right of the Palestinians to worship in Al-Haram Al-Sharif, as occurred today in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and it continues to isolate the city from the rest of the occupied territories.

All of the above proves once more the untrustworthiness and irresponsible nature of the Israeli regime, which have been demonstrated time and again over the years through the violation of many agreements despite the fact that the terms were clearly in its favour. We believe that under any circumstances it is absolutely necessary for the international community, represented by the United Nations, to look into the massacres committed by the Israeli forces over the past few weeks with a view to bringing the perpetrators to justice and preventing a recurrence of such crimes in the future. In this respect, I would like to refer to the resolution adopted yesterday in Geneva by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which, among other things, condemns Israel for widespread, systematic and gross violations of human rights and sets up an international commission of inquiry to investigate the violence in the occupied territories.

Moreover, media reports and official announcements indicate that the severe restrictions imposed by the Israeli regime on the movement of persons and goods is still in place, especially as it relates to the movement of persons. There is no doubt that such restrictions amount to imposing collective punishment on an entire population, severely damaging, *inter alia*, the efforts made by the Muslim and Arab peoples to provide emergency medical support to more than 3,000 Palestinians injured by the Israeli forces. The consensus opinion expressed and maintained by the international community over the last decade expresses explicitly the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War of 1949 to all the Arab and Palestinian territories. The continuation of illegal acts by the Israeli regime constitutes an international and complete violation of this Convention, as well as of numerous United Nations resolutions and international legal and political instruments. The excessive use of force by the occupiers and the killing of Palestinian civilians are the latest in a long list of grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention by Israel as the occupying Power.

The Israeli actions and policies are undoubtedly the main source of instability and insecurity in the region, creating an atmosphere of fear and anxiety among nations of the region, as well as in the entire international community. The agony is deepened when the world sees that Israel even disregards its obligations and commitments arising from agreements which it has willingly entered into, despite the

acknowledged fact that they have been designed mostly in its favour.

The question of Palestine remains the responsibility of the United Nations as the only universal and most representative body of the international community, and we therefore cannot and must not fail the people of Palestine. The Middle East region has been marked with enduring crisis, constant tension and destructive confrontation for more than half a century. This requires that the international community, represented by this Organization, effectively tackle the Palestinian issue with a view to bringing durable peace and justice to the Palestinian land and tranquillity to the region as a whole.

We believe that the only way to restore calm to troubled Palestine is to stop the brutal Zionist suppression of the Palestinians, to make the occupying regime pull out of the occupied land and to allow the Palestinian people to decide their fate freely. The international community should bring pressure to bear on Israel to halt its violent acts, which have claimed so many precious Palestinian lives.

Mr. Ahmad (Pakistan): The General Assembly is meeting today in a special emergency session to review the situation in the Middle East, particularly against the backdrop of a provocative act of certain Israeli elements in the vicinity of Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which has been followed by sustained and relentless violence against Palestinians throughout the occupied territories. Violence has begot violence. In his statement this afternoon, the Secretary-General highlighted the seriousness of the situation when he said, "feelings on both sides were at a fever pitch and there was a real danger of the situation spiralling out of control." (*supra.*)

Almost a hundred innocent lives have been lost, including those of children, in addition to injuries sustained by thousands of others. We deplore all the deaths which have occurred. We express our deepest sympathies to the families of those who have been killed or injured in these tragic events.

It is a matter of concern to us that the demands made recently, in Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000, are not being complied with. As a result, the situation has continued to deteriorate. It is therefore imperative to bring to an end the excessive and disproportionate use of force against the Palestinian people and to ensure Israel's compliance with its legal obligations and responsibilities as an occupying Power, under the Fourth Geneva Convention of 12 August 1949.

We support the call for the establishment of a mechanism of inquiry into the recent tragic events, with a view to finding the precise facts and preventing the recurrence of such events in the future. Above all, we believe that all possible efforts must be made for the resumption of the negotiations within the Middle East peace process on the already agreed basis, with the aim of achieving an early and final settlement between the two sides.

In this regard, we appreciate the efforts of the Secretary-General and of other Member States, and hope that the recent developments at Sharm el-Sheikh will bring about an end to the current violence against the Palestinian people and pave the way for durable peace. Earlier, the leaders of both sides had agreed to take the path of peace. This arduous journey is now threatened with failure because of the ongoing violence. It is our hope that the process can once again be resumed and that peace, which had recently come so tantalizingly close and yet remains so excruciatingly far, can be finally achieved.

What is clear is that no amount of force can suppress the determination of a people to free itself from foreign occupation. All legitimate struggles are rooted in the will of the people, and, if the history of freedom struggles all over the world is any guide, ultimately it is the will of the people that always prevails and triumphs.

Pakistan has steadfastly and unequivocally supported the just struggle for the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, as it supports those of all people suffering under alien occupation or foreign domination. We have consistently stated that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) continue to provide a viable and just framework for a durable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The United Nations must implement Security Council resolutions with regard to those people who are struggling to take back what is rightfully theirs — their land and the freedom to choose their destiny. For the international community, there is no alternative and there cannot be any exception. The seeds of durable peace, and not just in the Middle East, lie in the realization by peoples of their legitimate right to self-determination.

There can be no lasting peace in the Middle East without the attainment of the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people. These include the return of all occupied territories to the control of the Palestinian Authority, the establishment of an independent Palestinian State with Holy Jerusalem as its capital and the exercise of their full sovereignty over Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

We join the international call on Israel to resume dialogue with sincerity and to resolve all pending issues in order to lay the foundation for a permanent peace in the Middle East based on the implementation of all relevant United Nations resolutions as well as the agreements already reached between the two sides.

We agree with the Secretary-General that there can be no lasting security without lasting peace, and lasting peace must be predicated on justice and international law.

Mr. Legwaila (Botswana): We had hoped that the announcement three days ago in Sharm el-Sheikh that the bloody turmoil that had been threatening to destroy the progress made so far in the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians would come to an end and thus give a new fillip, a new lease of life, to the Oslo process. The situation remains volatile.

Botswana has always supported the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, because the alternative is unthinkable and too ghastly to contemplate. The events of the past few weeks leave no doubt about this alternative. Enough blood has already been shed, the blood not only of Palestinians and Israelis, but of the people of the Middle East as a whole over the years and decades. The words of the late Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Yitzhak Rabin, uttered seven years ago in Washington on the White House lawn still echo in our ears:

> "Let me say to you, the Palestinians: We are destined to live together on the same soil, in the same land. We, the soldiers who have returned from battle, stained with blood, we who have seen our relatives and friends killed before our eyes, we who have attended their funerals and cannot look into the eyes of their parents, we who have come from a land where parents bury their children, we who have fought against you, the Palestinians, we say to you today in a loud and a clear voice 'Enough of blood and tears. Enough'".

Chairman Arafat, in his remarks at the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in Washington in 1995 stated:

> "we must condemn and forswear violence totally ... Enough killing and enough killing of innocent people".

We echo these words here today in the General Assembly: Enough, enough of the bloodshed, the hatreds, the endless cycles of mayhem which benefit no one in the Middle East except the fanatics and the terrorists on both sides of the conflict.

We recognize the sometimes shuffling pace at which the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are progressing. The aspirations of the Palestinian people to have a homeland of their own have been frustrated for too long. Part of their nation is in exile enduring without end the indignities and agony of refugee life. Their frustration is understandable. Their impatience is only human. Botswana supports and will always support their right to self-determination in their own country.

Equally, we cannot ignore the facts of history. The people of Israel have their own tragic experiences to inform or influence their actions and dispositions as they contemplate making peace with their neighbours. They have no choice but to make peace with their neighbours, the Palestinians in this instance, to take risks for peace for their own sake, but we would not be helping the peace process if we thought that it was easy for an Israeli, even the most daring one, to make peace with a neighbour or neighbours he has grown to regard as a sworn enemy or enemies.

This special session will therefore serve a good and useful purpose if its *raison d'être* is to coax, cajole and encourage the Israelis and the Palestinians to return to the path of negotiations, to abandon and forswear the destructive logic of confrontation and war, and not to apportion blame against one side and give the impression that there were any angels in the bloody and chaotic confrontation we have just seen in the Middle East.

Each side of the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has to grapple with advocates of nihilist solutions to the conflict. The advocates of peaceful negotiations on both sides are often considered sell-outs at best and, at worst, guilty of apostasy. We must not encourage nihilism in the Middle East conflict by

giving the rejectionists the comfort of thinking that their indecent and zealous readiness to resort to armed confrontation at the slightest provocation is an act of positive heroism.

It must be stated, however, that provocations like the continued construction of Israeli settlements in the occupied areas and the insensitivity shown by both sides towards sites holy to Jews and Arabs are actions that can only be antagonistic to the peace process. I ask: how can the peace process thrive in an environment punctuated by the commotion and rumble of bulldozers clearing plots for the construction of settlements in areas that are the subject of negotiations? Israel would do well to discontinue the provocative and unhelpful practice of creating facts on the ground. This practice is inimical to the negotiation process. It compromises the process, in addition to being illegal.

Finally, let me say once again that Botswana is one with all those who condemn the violence, the destruction and the brutality we have seen on television and have read about in newspapers in the past two weeks. An urgent return to the peace process is the only viable solution to the Israeli-Palestinian problem. Much has been achieved so far. It should not be sacrificed on the altar of fanaticism and brinkmanship.

Mr. Johan Thani (Brunei Darussalam): Brunei Darussalam is pleased to participate once again at this resumed emergency special session to reaffirm its longstanding support for the right of Palestinians to self-determination and for the establishment of a Palestinian State. Like most speakers who have spoken before us, we are deeply concerned with the recent developments in Palestine, particularly in East Jerusalem and the Gaza Strip. The situation over the past few weeks has the potential to unravel the efforts and progress made over the years. In the light of these developments, the convening of this session at this particular juncture is therefore timely and crucial.

Brunei Darussalam believes that Israeli policies in East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories are an obstacle to real progress in the peace process. We would therefore like to join in the call being made by Member States that Israel should respect and implement its commitments, pledges and agreements concluded through the various peace processes, and to comply with all previous resolutions, including resolution 1322 (2000), which was recently adopted by the Security Council.

Brunei Darussalam has consistently supported all efforts to find a comprehensive settlement in the Middle East. To that end, we commend the efforts of all the parties concerned aimed at helping to bring the peace process back on track. My delegation also commends the Secretary-General for his tireless efforts to help facilitate the emergency summit at Sharm el-Sheikh.

In conclusion, Brunei Darussalam would like to reiterate its strong commitment, unwavering support and continued solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle for a just and lasting peace and for an independent Palestinian State.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me to join previous speakers in extending our congratulations to the President for his commendable efforts and profound understanding of the dimensions of the problem we are facing today in the Palestine area. Moreover, we would like to thank him for reconvening the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider item 5 of the agenda, entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". Furthermore, we would like to extend our thanks to Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his efforts to prevent the situation from further deteriorating and sliding to the brink of an unpredictable abyss.

The rapid deterioration of the situation in the region has made it necessary for us to resort to this forum to express our fears and concerns in an effort to seek a mechanism that would allow a way out of the present grave impasse. This predicament not only threatens security in the Middle East, but it may also extend to other countries of the world. It is within this tragic context that I will refrain from going into the details of the events currently unfolding in the Middle East. I am certain that all of us are well aware of those events, as well as of their underlying causes and the elements that contributed to their widespread expansion.

The experience of recent days has proved that the escalation of events in occupied Palestine has contributed significantly to inflaming emotions on Arab streets, where people can no longer put up with Israel's procrastination and its failure to comply with its obligations under the peace process. The prevailing

situation signals a serious backlash from people who, in the absence of effective action to safeguard their historical and natural rights, have begun to harbour serious doubts about the credibility of our international Organization. It is consequently imperative that we take serious, effective and rapid steps to guarantee the region's security and stability by putting an immediate stop to Israeli military violations, by calling on the Israeli Government to comply seriously and strictly with all international resolutions and by asking it to stop supporting any further provocative violations of the holy places in Palestine, which could inflame the sentiments of millions of Muslims all over the world.

My country would welcome any effort to restore stability and security to the region, be it within the United Nations or outside it, provided it preserves all the rights of the Palestinian people. In a statement issued on 18 October 2000, the Qatari cabinet conveyed its view that, if implemented by Israel, the outcome of the emergency Middle East summit held at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, while insufficient vis-à-vis the aspirations of the Palestinian people, would provide a suitable basis for the resumption of negotiations and for reviving the Palestinian track of the peace process. That statement further called upon Israel to halt its aggression and to implement the outcome of Sharm el-Sheikh and the agreements reached with the Palestinians in earlier stages of the peace process. That is what is needed to prevent the collapse of the peace process.

All peoples came away with a positive impression of last month's Millennium Summit; they were particularly encouraged by the fact that, in paragraph 1 of the Millennium Declaration (resolution 55/2), the heads of State or Government reaffirmed their faith in the Organization and its Charter as indispensable foundations of a more peaceful, prosperous and just world. To maintain the credibility generated by the Summit, we must not limit ourselves to standing idly by and expressing our abhorrence of flagrant aggression against innocent old men and women, children and babies. We need to take specific, practical steps to secure the rights of the Palestinian people, provide them with the safety and the security they need, and protect them from the attacks of the Israeli occupiers, as well as protect the holy places at Al-Quds Al-Sharif.

Hence, the State of Qatar supports the draft resolution on this agenda item, and will vote in its favour, since it is aimed at securing the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1322 (2000). I am confident that peace-loving States Members of the United Nations will not hesitate to support fully any measure that is conducive to peace and stability in the Middle East.

Mr. Powles (New Zealand): New Zealanders have been shocked by the violence that has been occurring in the Israeli-occupied territories for more than three weeks now. The images we have seen have been a stain upon humanity. I wish to convey my Government's deepest sympathies to the bereaved and the injured on all sides. New Zealand has responded promptly to an appeal by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East for emergency medical supplies.

I have taken the floor today primarily to express my Government's strong support for the important role undertaken by the Secretary-General in his tireless efforts to help broker an end to the violence. We greatly welcome the commitments made by Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak earlier this week at Sharm el-Sheikh. It is essential that the focus now should be on the implementation of those commitments. In that regard, we share the concerns of others in this Hall about the timing of this resumption of the tenth emergency special session and about the impact of the rhetoric it may evoke.

The key steps agreed at Sharm el-Sheikh include a committee of fact-finding on the events of the past several weeks, which will also examine ways to prevent their recurrence. No one should seek to prejudge the findings of that committee. But in circumstances in which it appears that neither party is blameless, we cannot ignore the particular obligation that Israel has as the occupying Power to protect the lives of civilians in the territories it occupies.

We hope that the committee of fact-finding will be able to carry out its work soon and with due objectivity. The truth must be known, responsibility accepted and a way back to the negotiating table found so that a final settlement, which has seemed so tantalizingly close at times, can be achieved. We join others in urging the parties to commit themselves anew to this process. It is the only way to ensure a just and lasting peace in the region.

Mr. Al-Otaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I wish to begin by thanking the President of the General Assembly for convening this resumption of the tenth emergency special session. The international community wished to resume its consideration of the item before us: The illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territories, which flagrantly violate the entire foundation of international humanitarian law and norms.

We wish also to thank the Secretary-General for the constructive role he has played; by virtue of the responsibilities vested in him by the United Nations Charter, he has contributed to the ultimate resolution of this crisis.

The tragic events we have seen in the occupied territories resulted from the provocative September visit by the leader of the Likud party, Ariel Sharon, to the mosque at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, accompanied by an official body guard. Despite the intensive diplomatic efforts undertaken, the situation got out of control. Such efforts took place both within and outside the area, and Kuwait was among the countries that did their utmost in this regard. We hope for a successful outcome to all the endeavours towards an immediate halt to Israeli actions in the occupied territories. For that reason, we welcomed Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000, which clearly condemned the excessive use of force against civilians in Palestine, and which called for its immediate cessation. The Council demanded that blind force no longer be used against defenceless Palestinian civilians. Israeli soldiers are committing crimes against humanity and flagrantly violating the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949.

The international community, as represented in the Security Council and the General Assembly, is doing everything it can to counter Israel's actions, for Israel has turned its back on international law. Urgent measures must be taken to bring about the following things.

First and foremost, illegal actions committed against civilians in the Israeli-occupied territories must be halted. Houses have been bulldozed and whole areas have been put to the torch.

Moreover, the fact that we now have a commission of inquiry to investigate these events and how they happened should give us a clearer idea of the situation and offer a measure of protection to the Palestinian people. These measures are preliminary and essential in character. What is important is that once the situation is calmer, we should prepare for a return to the negotiating table and to the peace process.

But for that to happen, the Israeli Government must be made aware of the fact that its repressive measures and practices will never provide it with the security it seeks. As long as it continues to occupy Palestinian territories and to violate the agreements signed with the Palestinians during the peace process, and as long as it remains obstinate in its aggression, it will achieve only one end: the undermining of stability in this vital but troubled region, which, over the course of the last 40 years, has been a theatre for confrontation and an obstacle to the progress of the peoples of the region, who are forced to devote their resources to defence rather than to development. A peace that is just, lasting and comprehensive must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. Israel must withdraw from all the Arab territories that it has occupied since 1967, including the Syrian Golan Heights, and must complete its withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

In conclusion, I should like to reiterate Kuwait's firm support of and solidarity with the Palestinian people and their justified demand to recover all their national rights, including the right to establish their own state, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. Shihab (Maldives): Mr. President, my delegation would like to express its deep appreciation to you for resuming this emergency special session, which is both timely and essential. The international community must take heed of the current crisis in the Middle East, which has the potential for disastrous consequences, not only for the region but also for the peace and security of the whole world.

Over the past years, we have witnessed a number of promising breakthroughs in the Middle East peace process. The international community, particularly the sponsors of the peace process, was glad to see the progress made towards a comprehensive and lasting peace in a region which has seen nothing but violence for over five decades, as a consequence of the denial of the rights of the Palestinian people and the occupation of Arab land by Israel. But it was conscious that the

path to peace was strewn with numerous obstacles, daunting challenges and treacherous conspiracies. It was aware that the Palestinians and the Israelis were traversing a very delicate and crucial bridge in the peace process. Hopes were high despite fears of a possible setback. We watched with optimism, as did the whole world, as the process moved in the right direction, until the ill-conceived visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif by Mr. Sharon on 28 September left the peace process aflame.

Today, once again, the Middle East is the focus of the attention of the world. Provocation and humiliation, frustration and violence have dragged the region not only into wanton bloodshed and destruction, but also to the brink of war and towards the death of the peace process. The Maldives has followed the recent developments in the occupied territories with grave concern and anxiety. We have seen innocent blood spilled. We have seen brutal beatings, and we have seen the use of excessive force against an unarmed civilian population in its own land. We have also seen indiscriminate assaults against innocent civilians and the death of over 100 of them. Israel has committed all these cruel acts against the Palestinians. We are appalled and angered by these inhuman and dastardly acts, and we condemn these as vehemently as possible.

Admittedly, there was Palestinian fury over the provocative visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif by some Israeli extremists, challenging the legitimacy of efforts for peace. But the justifiable fury drew a disproportionate and violent response from Israel.

We strongly and forcefully condemn these acts of violence and reject the inhuman policies of Israel. We stress that violence will only breed more violence, fuelling tension and increasing regional instability and insecurity. We call upon the international community to take urgent measures to put an end to Israeli acts of provocation and aggression against the people of Palestine and to ensure the swift implementation of the agreements reached between the Palestinians and Israel and within the broad spectrum of the peace process, most recently at the Sharm El-Sheikh summit. We must also ensure that an objective international inquiry is made into the recent events.

To achieve a just and comprehensive peace based on international legitimacy, Israel must carry out its commitments and immediately withdraw from all territories, including Jerusalem, that have been occupied by force. The continuation of the policy of settlements on occupied lands by the Israelis and their flagrant violations of the rights of the Palestinian people can only jeopardize the peace process.

The rights of the Palestinians have always been very close to the heart of every Maldivian. The Government of Maldives continues to express its solidarity with the Palestinian people and to support the Palestinian cause. We believe that a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East can be achieved only through unconditional Israeli withdrawal from all the Palestinian and Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. We have time and again raised our voice in support of the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to establish their own independent state on their national soil, with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital. In this context, we recall Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), which provide legitimacy for such action.

The Maldives is a peace-loving country, and we shall remain firm in our resolve to support peace anywhere and everywhere in the world. We believe that there is no alternative to peace. The Palestinian people have chosen the path of peace with courage. That is an irreversible choice which the United Nations must help them realize. That responsibility should not be shirked by the international community.

The President returned to the Chair.

Mr. Al-Hinai (Oman) (*spoke in Arabic*): I should like at the outset to extend my profound gratitude to you, Mr. President, for reconvening this emergency special session of the General Assembly in the context of the resumption of the discussion of the injustices faced by the Palestinian people in their occupied land. I should like in particular to thank the Secretary-General for his invaluable statement to this special session, in which he gave an assessment of the tragic situation in the occupied Arab territories. For our part, we should like to express our appreciation for his efforts and his participation in the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, the objective of which was to achieve a peaceful resolution of the struggle.

The practices of the occupying Israeli authorities against defenceless and unarmed civilians in the occupied Palestinian territories and the use of oppressive, violent measures and military force in dealing with the legitimate Palestinian resistance

against Israeli occupation, are totally unjustified under any circumstances. These practices are sure to mobilize the international conscience to take a firm position, condemning these actions and calling upon Israel to remove all forms of injustice from the aggrieved party, put an end to all forms of violence against the Palestinian people, adhere to its pledges and obligations and to implement internationally binding resolutions.

We were greatly astonished by Israel's attempt to lay the blame on the Palestinian National Authority by alleging that the Palestinian leadership provoked these acts of violence. We all know — Israel itself knows very well — that the conflagration was ignited after the provocative visit by the leader of the Likud Party to Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Arab Jerusalem. This provocative act, undertaken with Israeli military protection, stirred up and disregarded the feelings of Muslims.

We are deeply concerned about the Israeli escalation of violence, which seems to be deliberate, against the Palestinian people. We are also deeply concerned by the insistence of the Israeli Government on imposing a policy that it believes to be a solution by using military force and by killing dozens, wounding hundreds and displacing thousands of Palestinians who demand nothing but the justified right to liberate their occupied territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and achieve their inalienable rights.

My country urges the international community to fulfil its responsibilities to protect the Palestinian people, to urge Israel immediately to abide by Security Council resolutions; to respect human rights, international conventions, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which guarantees the protection of civilians in time of war, and Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973); and to implement its commitments undertaken in the agreements relevant to the peace process.

Mr. Pham Binh Minh (Viet Nam): At the outset, my delegation would like to commend your efforts, Mr. President, to resume in a timely manner the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory.

In September last year, the world community was elated at the signing of the Sharm el-Sheikh Memorandum, which ended a prolonged deadlock in the peace process in the Middle East and reawakened hopes for a final settlement of the Palestine-Israel issue and, beyond that, for a resolution of the entire Arab-Israeli question. But just one year later, those earnest hopes of the international community are being dashed by the outbreak of brutal violence on 28 September after the provocative visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. Tragically, as always, the Palestinians are the ones who suffer most severely from this dangerous situation.

We are deeply shocked by the unjustified killings of more than 100 innocent people and the excessive use of force by Israeli troops in Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. We call for the immediate cessation of violence and of the excessive use of force against Palestinians and for a return to the situation that existed prior to the current crisis. It is incumbent upon Israel, the occupying Power, to fulfil its duties and obligations under the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. In this regard, we welcome the 17 October ceasefire agreement in Sharm el-Sheikh between President Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and wish to see its implementation without delay. We believe the Sharm el-Sheikh summit is a positive step towards defusing tensions and creating the necessary conditions for the resumption of the Middle East peace process.

It is our conviction that the United Nations plays an essential role in the maintenance of peace and security in this region. In this regard, we welcome the current efforts of the Secretary-General in the quest for peace. We call for the full implementation of Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000. Failure to implement this resolution would cast doubt on the credibility of the Security Council.

As a nation which experienced numerous sacrifices and great suffering to gain national independence and freedom, Viet Nam, as always, strongly supports the Palestinian people's struggle for their inalienable rights, including the right to self-determination, the right to return home and the right to establish an independent State of Palestine, with Jerusalem as its capital. We believe that the Arab-Israeli conflict in the Middle East cannot be resolved peacefully without a just resolution of the question of Palestine. We welcome every initiative and effort by the regional and international communities to break the

deadlock, remove obstacles and put the peace process back on track with a view to reaching a peaceful, just and lasting settlement of the conflict on the basis of resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and other Security Council resolutions and of the land-for-peace principle.

It is our fervent hope that the voices in favour of peace will prevail in the Middle East. The Government of Viet Nam will work with the international community to continue to strive for a just and reasonable settlement of the question of Palestine.

Mr. Dorda (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya) *(spoke in Arabic)*: I am going to address the mind today. I do not intend to talk about the possibility of adopting draft resolutions, because resolutions express power. What I am going to talk about is history, geography and sociology. I am going to focus on three issues.

First, what is the nature of the question that we are discussing? It is a question on which the international community has scored an unbelievable zero by failing to find any solution whatsoever to the question.

Secondly, what is going on now? And why are we witnessing these recent developments?

Thirdly, what is the peace process about, and is there really a peace process?

On the first point, history and geography, we can go back to everything that has been written and recorded in history and geography through the ages — including maps prior to 1947 — but we will never find anything on the ground, either historically or geographically, called Israel. Israel is the name of the prophet Jacob. It was not the name of any land at any point in history anywhere on earth. Palestine is the name. That is the name of the land where a Palestinian population lived — Muslims, Christians and Jews.

If I worship God through Mohammed, then I am a Muslim; through Moses, then I am a Jew; through Jesus, then I am a Christian. This is religion. But citizenship and nationality are a totally different question. Shimon Peres is Jewish. The fact that he worships God through Moses does not cancel out the fact that he is from Belarus. That is his country, his citizenship and his nationality. Menachem Begin worshipped God through Moses too. This does not mean that he was not Polish — he came from Poland. He was Polish and he had Polish citizenship. Benjamin Netanyahu believes in God and worships God through Moses, but this does not mean that he is not American. He is from this city, New York City. If all followers of religions could go back to the same place where the divine message was delivered, they would find that all these messages descended on Arab land. These are called the revealed messages. Christ received the message of God in Palestine. Therefore, all Christians on earth could go and live in Palestine, and all Muslims on earth could go and live in Mecca or in Saudi Arabia. Citizenship and nationality are one thing, and religion is another. Religion comes from God. A homeland is for the people.

We Muslims are not believers until we believe in the following five things: first, God; secondly, his angels; thirdly, his books; fourthly, his prophets; and lastly, the day of reckoning. We believe in Moses; we believe in Jesus; and we believe in Mohammed. If not, then our belief is diminished and incomplete.

Palestine is for Palestinians — Jews, Arabs or Christians. It is for Palestinians who have lived there for ages, not for those who emigrated deliberately or were sent from every corner of the Earth to inhabit the land of Palestine and to depopulate the area of its original population. These are the facts.

It then becomes a question of occupation. If some Jews have suffered somewhere else on earth, the Palestinian people must not pay the price of the plight of Jews in other corners of the earth. It is then a question of occupation. It should be dealt with on that basis; otherwise, it should not be dealt with and there will never be a solution.

I know about political niceties and the pressures that are exerted every day on all capitals and missions. It has been done before; it is being done in the Security Council; and it will be done again. This will not lead to objective thinking. Even if Security Council members' convictions were such, they would not lead them to adopt a position and a resolution in consonance with history and geography.

Libya, as I said yesterday, worships only God and fears nobody but God. It is indeed interested in revealing all historical, geographical and sociological facts. Libya was the only country that stood with Germany when it was divided into two Germanies. Perhaps we will experience political circumstances that would change geography and lead to a redrawing of the map, as happened with Germany after the Second World War. But those historical and geographical

circumstances were consistently outweighed by the sociological factor. When there are different historical circumstances, sociological facts such as redrawing the map of Germany and then the reunification of Germany become more pronounced. Germany is one social unit. Muammar Al-Qadhafi said that in Belgrade at the Non-Aligned Movement summit, eight years before the fall of the Berlin Wall. People laughed; some mocked that statement, because they were ignorant of history and of the correct basis for analysis.

Eight years later — a very short period in the course of history — Germany was reunified. The social factor triumphed over the historical and geographical factors. Viet Nam was also divided, because of historical circumstances, but the social factor once again came to outweigh the other factors, and Viet Nam was unified again. This is exactly what will happen with Korea, where the social factor will take over again and outweigh other factors.

Let us go to the second point. What is happening these days? What is happening is that one of the parties — the occupying party — is using its helicopter gunships to bombard and its tanks and guns to shoot at civilian Palestinians; then it expects the other party not to respond, not even with stones. We then call this response violence? This does not go by the name "violence", my friends. This is self-defence, the least possible manifestation of self-defence. Would any of us allow another person to slap us and not even try to ward off that slap? Is simply trying to ward off such a slap called violence? Is protecting oneself considered violence?

This is a severe injustice. This injustice is what moved the masses in the Palestinian streets, the Arab streets and many streets all over the world, including in American cities. This injustice reached unprecedented proportions and the result was an explosion. And when an explosion takes place, neither the United Nations nor non-united nations, regional summits, the Sharm el-Sheikh summit or the Camp David summit can check the consequences of the explosion.

Why can we not be reasonable and rational and try to find a correct solution before the Arab region explodes? The Arab region is pregnant with the possibility of exploding, and it will give birth to such an explosion very soon. We do not know if the baby will be healthy or sick. No one can predict this. I believe that it will be a very sick baby, and then we will have a disaster on our hands.

Thirdly, what is it that we call the peace process? Palestinian land is occupied. The Palestinians also suffer from the diseased reality in the Arab world, from the deteriorating situation of the Arab nation. Official Arab regimes are weak and sick. The Arab masses have accepted what their regimes have accepted, not because they were satisfied, but because it was a necessity. They accepted the occupation of Arab territory in 1967. Why does the occupier not leave these territories and give the land back to its people so that they can live a normal life there?

The occupiers refuse to do this. They have established settlements. Where are these settlements? Around every single city or village in the West Bank and Gaza there is a circle of settlements, and another circle of settlements. And so all Palestinian cities and villages have become islands in an ocean. Where is peace then?

This is the territory that was occupied in 1967. The dialogue goes like this: "Give it back to me." "No, I will not. I will give you the village that is encircled by settlements of occupiers. I will give you the city that is encircled by settlements." So the territory will not be given back. These are the facts on the ground.

The Palestinian population was forced to leave Palestine — more than 4 million Palestinians. The doors were opened for them to emigrate; they were given money and jobs, so long as they left Palestine. These people are in Canada, Australia and the United States. They want to go back. The occupiers say "no, they cannot come back". So the Palestinians cannot go back. The land cannot be given back, or if it is given back, it will be a village encircled by a block of settlements. So, where is this peace? The land will not be given back; the person who has been forced to emigrate cannot return: where is this peace?

These are the facts. Any other philosophy, political declaration or statement will not cancel out any of the facts that I have mentioned. What kind of peace does the Assembly expect as a result of this kind of process?

There was a child whom all members of the Assembly saw on their television screens: a child taking refuge next to his father, behind a small rock that was not large enough for him and his father, a

child asking for mercy and finding no mercy — instead, he was shot dead. Do Assembly members believe that peace can be achieved between a defenceless population, armed only with stones, and another people that bombards that unarmed population by land, by sea and from the air, and with settlers who have occupied the land and houses of that defenceless Palestinian population for years and years?

Arabs are not against the Jews. In the Arab nation we believe in Moses. But we are against the occupiers who came from every corner of the Earth to occupy Palestine. There is not a single justification — geographical, historical or otherwise — for Jews to be in Palestine.

Let me explain this. It is in the history books; I have not invented it. In Libya the Green Mountains — Jabal al Akhdar — were a candidate for a homeland for the Jewish people. Argentina was another candidate. Uganda was yet another. I urge Assembly members to read their history books. Those countries were candidates. But when the geology of the Green Mountains was studied, it was seen that there were geological fault lines, which meant that all the rain would wash down to the sea and there would not be enough underground water to develop the area. A delegation came to the Green Mountains in 1905 for that study. This is part of history. If the Jewish people had a historical right to Palestine, why were they looking in Argentina, Uganda or the Green Mountains of Libya for a homeland?

I know that some do not know these facts. They have not read about them because the huge media machine that is financed by some rich Jews has not disseminated them.

As I said earlier, I am trying to appeal to minds. I am not seeking to get a resolution adopted because resolutions inevitably and repeatedly express the balance of power. If the international community does not address this issue, the balance of power will change, as happened in Germany and Viet Nam. There will come a time when the baby is delivered and then we will all regret the opportunities squandered.

The Arab rulers who will meet tomorrow in Cairo are caught between a rock and a hard place. They are caught between two fires: the fire of people who participate in demonstrations and sit-ins and the pressure exerted by the United States. Which of these two fires will they choose? When their thrones are shaken, all will know which position to adopt, but by then there will be neither rulers nor palaces nor Governments to yield to pressure from anyone, no matter how strong or powerful, because power will reside in the street.

We have seen this in Iran. We have seen the power of the people. There was a Shah, an Emperor, but the power of the street undermined that despot and overthrew him. The people were victors. In Addis Ababa, there was another tyrant who, like the Shah, was supported by all the major Powers. The people took to the streets in Ethiopia and the Emperor was soon relegated to history, as happened recently in Yugoslavia. I would urge those who pay no heed to such examples to recall them.

Mr. Insanally (Guyana): The chorus of views which this Assembly has heard, both on Wednesday and today, from so many member States undoubtedly reflects the grave concern now felt by the entire international community that the rapidly deteriorating situation in the Middle East might not only jeopardize the peace process which was undertaken by Israel and Palestine, but also lead to a dangerous escalation of the conflict, with unpredictable consequences.

In responding to these worrying developments, my Government recently issued a press communiqué publicly deploring this latest outbreak of fighting and, more particularly, the tragic killings on both sides. The text of this statement has been distributed for the information of the membership of the Organization, so that I have little to add on this occasion. I may say, however, that although we remain distressed by the continuing failure to reach a peaceful and lasting settlement of the region's problems, we are somewhat encouraged to believe by the Secretary-General's report this afternoon on his peacemaking mission to the affected region that a settlement of the fundamentally important issues is still possible. This can only materialize, however, if extremism is avoided on all sides and a genuine effort made to achieve cooperation and compromise through dialogue and negotiation.

The Government of Guyana further believes that Security Council resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October 2000 and other relevant resolutions which have been adopted both by the General Assembly and the Security Council in relation to the Palestinian question, as well as the accords which have been reached directly between Israel and Palestine, provide an ample

framework for pursuing the search for agreement. We therefore join the call on the parties involved to avoid further confrontation and to return to the negotiating table with a view to finding an acceptable solution to the problems which separate them. In this context, as the occupying Power, Israel has a special responsibility to observe all relevant international conventions to protect the Palestinian people from harm.

Bearing in mind the deeply rooted differences between the two main protagonists, we urge the Secretary-General and influential countries to play a greater auxiliary role in creating a new environment that is favourable to an accommodation of the vital interests of each party. We, as the supreme organ of the United Nations, must also rise above recrimination to make a sensible and concerted effort to renew meaningful discussions between Palestine and Israel.

My Government is prepared to consider any resolution which emerges from this debate that can enjoy widespread support and serve to rekindle our hopes for agreement between the parties. In this regard, we appeal to Israel and Palestine to avoid a war of words which may aggravate the situation. More important than any wordy resolution is the political will needed at this stage to bring an end to conflict.

Let me say in conclusion that, as a Member of the United Nations and its Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, Guyana will not fail to work for the cause of peace and justice in the Middle East so that all peoples in the region, including Palestine and Israel, may live within secure borders and be allowed to enjoy the full fruits of peace and development.

Mr. Franco (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for my delegation to address the General Assembly on behalf of the countries of the Rio Group with respect to the situation in the Middle East.

This is not the first time that we have spoken on the situation in the Middle East. Only recently, on 6 October, the Rio Group issued a communiqué in which it responded to the earlier violent events occurring in that region, at the cost of many civilians lives and numerous wounded. On that occasion, we emphatically called on all the parties involved to do their utmost to calm passions, eschew violence and seek the early renewal of dialogue in pursuit of a definitive peace settlement for the region via negotiations.

Some days later, on 13 October, we spoke out again in the light of the intensified violence. On that occasion, we firmly rejected the use of force and expressed our wholehearted support for the actions undertaken in that region by the Secretary-General and by various actors of the international community, in particular the United States, the Russian Federation, the European Union and the countries of the area. We recognized the efforts of those parties to attempt to create conditions of stability in the region, establish a propitious climate for resuming negotiations, end the violence and foster renewed dialogue in order to re-establish peace in the region.

We have noted with hope the understanding reached at the Sharm el-Sheikh Summit, and we trust that this will be consolidated in a clear step to re-establish the climate of trust necessary to restart the peace process in the region.

We hope that the outcome of this special session of the General Assembly will contribute to allowing us to move beyond the current situation and will reactivate the peace process. In this regard our efforts and decisions must aim at achieving clarification of the facts, must ensure an end to the violence and must support the resumption of negotiations. We must facilitate the creation of an environment propitious to these aims.

We reaffirm our conviction that it is necessary to guarantee respect for the principles of the Charter, the norms of international humanitarian law and the implementation of the resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council on this matter.

Mr. Alemán (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I would like to endorse the words of the distinguished representative of Colombia, who spoke on behalf of the Rio Group.

The tragic events which have recently occurred in Gaza and the West Bank demonstrate how important it is for Israel and Palestine to redouble their efforts in order to avoid a recurrence of the unprecedented acts of violence which have been broadcast by the media around the world. When negative sentiments surface, the voice of reason is silenced, and then it becomes possible to witness with shock and condemnation the desecration of religious sites and inhumane conduct; this must disappear from the face of the earth. Nevertheless, this violence is taking place within the broader context of the continuous occupation of the

Palestinian territories and the clear need to find an early, just, global and definitive solution to the Palestinian question in conformity with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations.

With the adoption of resolution 1322 (2000) on 7 October, the Security Council once again called upon Israel and Palestine to set aside violent attitudes and urged them to resume negotiations in the framework of the Middle East peace process. The commitment made in Sharm el-Sheikh on 17 October has provided basic guidelines for a ceasing of hostilities and a restarting of negotiations.

Ecuador, in conformity with the fundamental principles of its international policy, advocates peaceful solution of conflicts and rejects the occupation of territories and the use or the threat of the use of force in international relations. Ecuador believes that Israel is entitled to live in peace within secure, recognized borders and believes that the Palestinian people have the same right, in conformity with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations, which recognized its inalienable right to free determination and independence. Moreover, my delegation is concerned about the disproportionate use of force against the civilian Palestinian people and the deterioration of respect for human rights in the occupied territories.

We made a similar statement during the special session of the Commission on Human Rights which met recently in Geneva to discuss this situation in the occupied territories. At that time we said that Ecuador maintains the principle that human rights are not negotiable and are to be universally respected with no conditions attached and no exceptions. Peace and cooperation between the peoples of Israel and Palestine will only be achieved with the triumph of reason and tolerance. This will remain unattainable the less respect there is for the fundamental rights of individuals, standards of international law and justice.

Never before had an overall peace settlement been so near, as a consequence of the Oslo Agreement and those agreed upon in Wye River and Sharm el-Sheikh. We must not allow the provocation in Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which seems to have triggered the situation we now see in the occupied territories and the horrible events of recent days, to stymie or negate this process. Consequently, Ecuador joins the call to the leaders of Israel and Palestine to put an end to the unsustainable situation that is undermining the huge efforts made so far.

Geography destined Israel and the Palestinians to be neighbours. History, which is made by men, must allow them to live together peacefully and in friendship. Only a negotiated solution, not one which is imposed, will make it possible for both peoples to leave behind confrontation and replace distrust with understanding so that they will never again be protagonists or victims of the spiral of violence and insecurity which frequently darkens their relations.

In this regard, on behalf of my Government I would like to express our resolute support for the steps taken by the Secretary-General of the United Nations, which together with those taken by other world leaders — in particular those of the United States of America, Russia, the European Union and the countries of the region such as Egypt and Jordan — will gradually allow a return to calm in this region of upheaval.

Ecuador believes that the outcome of this special emergency session of the General Assembly should contribute to this goal and encourage the two peoples to return to the negotiating table in a constructive spirit prepared to build a future of harmony so that coming generations will harvest the fruits of what has so far been such an elusive peace.

Ms. Lee (Singapore): Once again, the situation in the Middle East has reached a critical juncture. For the past few years, we have lived in the hopes of peace. These hopes have been shattered. Conflict has once again escalated. Our immediate priority is to snap out of the vicious cycle of escalating violence. We hope that the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting will calm the troubled waters.

But we need to do more. We need to get back to the road of peace. To do so, we can no longer resort to entrenched positions and old ways of doing things. We must find the courage and strength to take bold steps forward.

We commend the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his bold initiative of personally going to the Middle East to conduct shuttle diplomacy directly with the leaders concerned. With his usual diplomatic skills, the Secretary-General succeeded in bringing the concerned parties and other key players together in Sharm el-Sheikh. The

involvement of the Secretary-General and the results of the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting are crucial steps in the right direction. We are grateful to the Secretary-General for his briefing earlier this afternoon, and we give him our full support for his continued role in the Middle East peace process.

Two weeks ago we were horrified by the television footage of the killing of a 12-year-old Palestinian boy, Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra, in the arms of his father who tried valiantly to shield him from Israeli bullets. His death was one of the more than 100 deaths and scores of injuries that have occurred in the past two weeks, mainly among Palestinian civilians. The international community is shocked by these needless and wanton killings. Singapore hopes that steps towards establishing a mechanism for a speedy and objective inquiry into the tragic events — as outlined in Security Council resolution 1322 (2000), adopted on 7 October, and agreed upon at the summit meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh — will be taken urgently. If such an inquiry is conducted swiftly, it might help assuage the anger over the excessive use of force by Israeli forces against Palestinian civilians and prevent a further escalation of the tensions.

We were equally horrified to witness on our television screens the lynching of two Israeli soldiers by Palestinian civilians, in plain sight of Palestinian police. There must also be a full inquiry into that incident. All human lives, whether Palestinian or Israeli, are equally precious. We note that the Palestinian Authority has already conducted a full investigation. We hope to hear the results of both inquiries soon.

Those two scenes we witnessed on television were excruciating but brief snapshots of a much larger crisis unfolding before our eyes in the Middle East. They might not represent the complete picture of what has been happening. However, these pictures have fuelled much of the subsequent emotions and violence. This new, highly charged atmosphere in the Middle East makes it impossible for the parties concerned to react calmly. But we, here at the United Nations, must try to remain objective and we must work relentlessly to find concrete and helpful ways of de-escalating the violence and saving precious human lives.

The conflict in the Middle East does not affect only Palestinians and Israelis. We, the international community, also have a stake in resolving the crisis. The violence has already spread to other parts of the Middle East. It has also had global effects leading to the hardening, polarization and radicalization of positions. We have already witnessed heated demonstrations across the globe, including here in New York, just outside the United Nations and on Wall Street, and oil prices have also been affected. Bad news gets globalized as quickly as good news in the new world we live in.

Singapore hopes that urgent steps will be taken by the Security Council and the parties concerned to implement resolution 1322 (2000), as well as the agreement reached in Sharm el-Sheikh. We must give priority to the immediate cessation of violence and use of force. We hope that all sides will heed the call of the Security Council and exercise maximum restraint, both in words and in deeds. Both sides have also agreed to issue public statements unequivocally calling for an end to the violence. As a concrete follow-up to the Millennium Summit and a tangible demonstration of solidarity in the cause of world peace, all world leaders should join them in calling for the violence to be halted.

Singapore recognizes that the final steps to peace must be taken by the parties themselves. We are also cognizant of the fact that any action taken by the United Nations must complement and not undermine the efforts of others that are deeply involved in the Middle East peace process. But no instrument of peace, including the United Nations, the good offices of the Secretary-General, the General Assembly and the Security Council, should be excluded. As evidenced by the crucial role played by the Secretary-General, the United Nations could indeed be a positive force in the peace process. Singapore fully supports the efforts of the Secretary-General. In fact, we believe that with the backing of the entire international community, the Secretary-General is uniquely placed to play the role of a neutral and even-handed mediator.

To enhance the capacity of the Secretary-General to play the role of a mediator, the General Assembly should clearly demonstrate that it is taking a fair and objective view of the current situation. Any draft resolution put before the Assembly on this item should attempt to get the largest number of votes possible to capture the views of the moderate middle. We believe that neither the rejection of any resolution whatsoever nor insistence on an unbalanced resolution will help the situation. As the Secretary-General has stated, "words

can inflame or soothe". (*supra.*) We hope that through sincere negotiations and patient consultations, we will adopt a balanced resolution which is supported by the large majority of Member States.

In the midst of these dark days, we must not lose sight of what we have accomplished in recent years. Both parties have made tremendous progress in the last seven years since the Oslo peace accord towards finding a comprehensive and lasting agreement. The costs of failure are too great, not just for Israelis and Palestinians, but for the whole Middle East. We cannot afford to return to the past, when violent confrontations were daily occurrences. Violence cannot supplant negotiations in the Middle East.

Singapore believes in a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. We believe that no country, however big or small, should be denied the right to exist. This is equally applicable to the Palestinians and to the Israelis. At the same time, we strongly believe that the fruits of conquest should not be forcibly converted into spoils of war. We also fully support Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973). Israel has achieved statehood and recognition by some of its neighbours. The Palestinians should be given the opportunity to do the same through a negotiated peace process. The sooner this happens, the easier it will be to achieve comprehensive peace and security for the Palestinians, Israel and its neighbours. The alternatives to peace are too horrendous for us to contemplate.

Mr. Heinbecker (Canada) (*spoke in French*): Canadians have been deeply troubled by the conflict that has engulfed the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and Israel. Senseless violence threatens to sweep away years of effort to build mutual confidence and to lay the basis for a final agreement on a solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. Television is full of images of dreadful violence that repulse decent people everywhere.

(*spoke in English*)

The current situation in the Middle East is profoundly undermining the human security of the people there and of their communities. When politics and discourse fail, people suffer, children above all. Children who should be protected, not exploited or victimized, have particularly suffered in the current crisis — the trauma of personal loss, the terror of violence, social dislocation and general insecurity. We must not allow respect for international humanitarian and human rights law and principles, and tolerance between communities also to become casualties. We believe that the best way to restore human security is to stop the downward vortex of actions and reactions.

From the beginning of the crisis Canada has pursued two fundamental objectives, both multilaterally through the United Nations and bilaterally with our partners in the Middle East. Canada wants to see the immediate cessation of violence and the prompt return to negotiations. We support those efforts that we believe contribute to these objectives. We welcome the commitments made at Sharm el-Sheikh and we call on the parties to respect them. The success of those political efforts will hinge on the ability of all concerned to put the safety, security and well-being of people first and, in so doing, to help restore the stability and tolerance that is necessary to this tormented region.

We are profoundly grateful for the efforts of the Secretary-General. He has played a critical role in helping to contain violence and in bringing the parties together at a time when hope was at a low ebb and faltering. We pay tribute also to the unflagging efforts of President Clinton and to the leadership of President Mubarak in the urgent quest for peace in the Middle East. Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat demonstrated at the Sharm el-Sheikh summit that they too are capable of exerting the leadership necessary to break the cycle of violence, to begin the process of healing and to rebuild the trust that has been so severely damaged. They owe no less to future generations of Israelis and Palestinians.

There is no alternative to negotiations if Palestinians and Israelis are to live in peace. It is time for them and for us all to look forward. All Member States have a responsibility to help create a climate that is conducive to the achievement of peace. In that connection we have informed you, Mr. President, that we doubt that this emergency session will have a beneficial impact on the situation on the ground.

(*spoke in French*)

We are particularly mindful of the Secretary-General's wise caution that language can also be violence and that everyone needs the restoration of calm and quiet. Let us be part of the solution and not part of the problem.

The President: I should like to inform members that in connection with this item, the Assembly has before it a draft resolution issued as document A/ES-10/L.6, which is now being distributed in the Hall.

Mr. Valdez Carrillo (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Peruvian delegation wishes to join the general feeling, expressed in this tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, welcoming the commitment agreed at Sharm el-Sheikh this week, which established the bases for the renewal of the peace process by Israel and Palestine. That agreement was the result of a joint effort in which the Secretary-General of the Organization, to whom we have attentively listened today, played an important role.

Peru hopes that the objectives agreed at Sharm el-Sheikh will be integrally implemented and understood in their real dimensions by the different actors and parties involved, based on the understanding that those objectives are the only viable way to a final peace. The international community would then be able to recover the optimism reflected in last session, which was reinforced a few months ago by the Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon in accordance with resolution 425 (1978) and resolution 426 (1978) of the Security Council.

The Government of Peru learned with great concern and sorrow of the recent tragic events in that region and on 12 October 2000 issued an official communiqué deploring the violent acts in the Middle East, the tragic number of deaths and injuries and the serious material damage to both sides, all of which constituted a real threat to the development of peace talks between the Government of Israel and the Palestinian National Authority.

At that time the Government also urged the immediate cessation of violence and encouraged international efforts to resume negotiations. My delegation believes this process must be categorically supported at this special session of the General Assembly through a consensual text, the objective of which can only be to promote the cessation of violence and to facilitate the establishment of and broaden the scope of dialogue, negotiation and understanding.

Peru has favoured a peaceful approach to the resolution of disputes as the only alternative that can achieve lasting peace and development. In this regard, together with our neighbours, we have recognized the difficulties and the swings back and forth that come in negotiations and the time, patience, creativity and dedication they demand, as well as their rewards, and the sincere will of the peoples to achieve a lasting peace and begin to enjoy its benefits.

These efforts have fostered the shaping of a new regional political scenario characterized by peace, respect for treaties, friendship, integration, cooperation, confidence and development. If this experience teaches us anything, it is that there can be no limits to or excuses for not carrying out efforts to achieve peace.

Thus we believe that excuses must not be used in the Middle East peace negotiations and that the effort that began in Oslo and Madrid and continued with the 1995 Washington treaties on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the 1999 Sharm El-Sheikh Memorandum, must be further strengthened.

We emphasize the need to fully implement the relevant General Assembly resolutions, adopted on the basis of the Charter, international law, humanitarian law and particularly resolution 242 (1967) and resolution 338 (1973) of the Security Council, which form the basis of the Middle East peace process and will contribute to irreversibly encouraging world peace.

Peru, which has emphasized at different times the need to guarantee free access to and due respect for the holy sites, wishes to add an appeal for the need not to use the sites politically or for personal benefit through provocations, against the historical and religious significance they represent, making them emerge as a direct source of conflict.

Peru also rejects violence, calls for violence and the measures that tend to provoke terror as part of the negotiations of the peace process. My country was a victim of criminal violence in the past and knows that its leads nowhere except to an increase in violence itself.

Peru will follow attentively, with interest and hope, forthcoming developments in this peace process, which is the only possible route to building an area of peace, reconciliation, understanding, solidarity and justice in the Middle East region, the ongoing wish of the international community as a whole.

Mr. Shobokshi (Saudi Arabia) (*spoke in Arabic*): We have listened with great attention and appreciation

to the report of the Secretary-General, whose efforts at restoring stability, peace and security in the region we find invaluable.

The tragedy of the Palestinian people has once again led us to meet at the General Assembly to call for an end to the brutal practices of the Israeli occupation forces against the defenseless Palestinian people, who have only stones to defend their usurped rights with. The international community is once again called upon to condemn the Israeli occupation and Israel's violent practices against Palestinian men, women and children, whose only fault was to protest Israel's acts of aggression against Muslim holy sites and to stand up to the desecration of those places.

Israeli media have tried to give the impression that responsibility for the massacres carried out by Israeli forces lies with the Palestinian people. Moreover, those media have sought to draw much attention to the deaths of two Israeli policemen at Ramallah who were members of a unit hated by the Palestinian people. Such reporting provoked the Palestinian people, who wanted to take revenge for the killing of their families. The deaths of those two soldiers would never have happened had it not been for the fact that hundreds of defenseless and innocent Palestinians have been killed, including children, women and elderly people. We compliment the Israeli media's ability to distort facts and falsify reality, but its skill in doing so cannot make us forget the ten-year-old martyr Mohammed Al-Durra or the other martyrs who fell to Israeli bullets and who had no weapons to use against the Israeli occupation forces that had the most lethal weapons at their disposal.

Mohammed Al-Durra, who fell while seeking his father's protection after being terrified by bullets flying towards him, had not fired any bullets against the occupation forces; it was those forces who blatantly first fired at his legs to keep him from escaping, then shot him through the heart. He was neither an extremist nor a terrorist. He was just another Palestinian child who fell victim to Israel's tyranny. Innocent children who dreamed of a future of peace also fell victim to Israeli forces. They had not come from all corners of the Earth to occupy Arab territories. Mohammed Al-Durra and the other victims of Israeli aggression were Palestinians who were born in Palestine and had been part of Islamic and Arab civilization there for countless years.

Deceptive Israeli media cannot make world public opinion forget the principal reasons for the latest Palestinian uprising. That uprising took place as a result of a Zionist terrorist's desecration of Islamic holy sites; it would not have happened had it not been for the fact that the Israeli Government never protected those religious places or paid heed to the 1954 Convention for the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, or the Additional Protocols to the Fourth Geneva Convention concerning the protection of civilian property, all of which protected these Islamic holy places. The anger of the Arabs and that of the world would not have been inflamed had it not been for the fact that the Israeli Prime Minister ignored Ariel Sharon's act of aggression against the holy places. Nor would that anger have been manifested had it not been for the fact that tanks and helicopters fired upon Palestinians, thereby undermining the peace and stability of the area by playing the game of Israeli politics.

Israeli sharp-shooters shot Palestinians in the eyes, heads and chests. Eighty-seven per cent of the injuries to Palestinians were to the upper part of the body and head, with a high percentage to the eyes. We have all seen broken Palestinian bodies: heads crushed and eyes plucked out. These brutal acts were not based on anything other than the hatred felt by Israelis towards Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims in general. Demonstrations and protests take place throughout the world, and security forces are there only to protect the peace. They do not commit premeditated murder; rather, they try to protect demonstrators and facilitate their protests. They do not use bullets against them or fire upon them with guns equipped with silencers, rocket-equipped helicopters and tanks.

The world applauded the Yugoslavs when they took over their Parliament building. Are we to blame the Palestinians when they protest against the desecration of their holy places? Is it right for the entire world, but not for the Palestinians, to defend their rights? Are not Palestinians and Arabs human like everyone else? Do they not have the right to seek liberation and independence? Are they not entitled to enjoy human rights like everyone else? Are Palestinians only to die in large numbers at the hands of Israeli occupiers, with no one's conscience being alarmed? And when two Israeli occupation soldiers are

killed, do we then blame the victims and raise our voices in protest?

No matter how good the deceptive Israeli media are, they cannot manufacture facts. The first fact is that one can deal with this issue only by dealing with the root causes of the problem and discovering what the true facts are. People will always know how to tell right from wrong.

Sharon's desecration of Al-Haram Al-Sharif was the event that triggered bottled-up Palestinian anger in the wake of the failure of the Camp David summit. The Palestinian people realized how their demands had never been met and how their aspirations had never been achieved. Meetings between Palestinians and Israelis were going nowhere owing to the arbitrary way with which Israel has dealt with every agreement reached.

Seven years after Oslo, Palestinians are now surrounded by settlements that continue to expand and multiply. They are being placed into bantustans that are encircled by the forces of the occupation. They are separated from each other and from Arab lands and subjected to wanton closures. Palestinians will never feel safe and secure in a situation devoid of any dignity; a situation that could never be said to be in keeping with human rights and that will never allow them an avenue to the outside world. In fact, they feel threatened by everyone and from everywhere. Their land is being usurped; roads are being built through it to enable Israelis to travel; their houses are being bulldozed; their produce is held at Israeli border points until it rots; and their workers are forbidden to enter Israel to earn their living. How could they fail to be disappointed? How could they fail to revolt? How could they fail to rise up? How could they fail to demand their rights and freedoms?

It is also true that the continued provocations and humiliations to which Arab dignity has been subjected and the acts of aggression against Islamic shrines have had disastrous consequences and will be very difficult to contain. This will have a severely negative effect on the security of the entire region, owing to the aggression and extremism of the Israelis and to their refusal to acknowledge Palestinian aspirations.

We could continue to speak of the facts for days on end, but it is our hope that the international community will realize that merely talking about peace and claiming to seek peace will not be enough unless coupled with deeds and with the implementation of the legitimate international will, of the resolutions of the international community, foremost among which are Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and of the principle of land for peace. It is only common sense that when there is occupation, there will be resistance; when there is injustice, there will be no justice; and when there is no justice, there will be no peace.

Needless to say, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia — whose constitution is the Koran and whose approach is based on Islamic teaching — believes in peace and justice. It believes in any approach that will lead to comprehensive peace and that will guarantee the sanctity of all occupied territories and Islamic shrines and the right of the Palestinian people to establish an independent State of its own with Jerusalem as its capital. That will lead to peace and stability in the region.

Mr. Andjaba (Namibia): I wish to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this resumed tenth emergency special session to consider the issue of illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. This was necessitated by the highly precarious and volatile situation in the Middle East.

My delegation wishes to express its gratitude to the Secretary-General for the statement he made to the Assembly on the current developments in the Middle East. We admire his courage, and we support his efforts on behalf of this Organization. Namibia has always emphasized the central role of the United Nations in the Middle East peace process.

The current crisis in the Middle East takes place against the backdrop of repeated failure by Israel to comply with various United Nations resolutions. The situation was exacerbated by the provocative visit by Mr. Ariel Sharon to Al-Haram Al-Sharif. His actions were a deliberate provocation, and they caused a serious setback in the delicate peace process. Neither the Israelis nor the embattled people of Palestine derive any benefits from such calculated provocations.

My delegation strongly condemns the current wave of violence unleashed by Israeli security forces against Palestinian civilians, including children. We are particularly disheartened by the large number of deaths and injuries resulting from the use of excessive force and from the indiscriminate deployment of heavy

weaponry, such as helicopter gunships and tanks, by Israel. I wish to take this opportunity to express my delegation's profound condolences to the families of all those who have been killed or wounded.

The military occupation and economic strangulation of Palestinian territories must be stopped; they are inhuman and deny the Palestinian people their basic human rights. The events of the past few weeks have again highlighted the grave breaches by Israel of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949, which is applicable to all territories occupied by Israel since 1967. Israel, as the occupying Power, should ensure that all provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention are fully implemented.

These tragic events have also made it crucial that an independent fact-finding commission be established to investigate the events that have occurred since 28 September 2000.

The current situation in the Middle East also points to the fact that the exercise of the rights of the Palestinian people to independence and self-determination remains central to the achievement of a lasting and comprehensive peace in the Middle East. Namibia steadfastly supports the just struggle of the Palestinian people to that end. In this regard, we continue to believe that Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) provide a viable framework for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It is also important that Security Council resolution 1322 (2000), which was adopted during an emergency meeting of the Security Council on 7 October, be speedily and fully implemented.

The peace process has undoubtedly suffered a serious setback. However, now more than ever it is required of both parties that they face these challenges and, first of all, that they calm the situation and thereafter resume the peace process. In this regard, we once again welcome the courageous and intensive efforts by the Secretary-General, as well as initiatives by other players, to achieve that goal. We furthermore welcome the outcome of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit, which we believe provided a critically important start to resuscitating the peace process. It is our hope that the parties will be able to further build on that agreement.

In conclusion, my delegation reiterates its unwavering support for the exercise of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. We also continue to support the peace process between Palestine and Israel and the efforts by the Secretary-General to that end. We therefore regard the draft resolution before us as appropriate and necessary, and we fully support it.

Mr. Satoh (Japan): This emergency special session has been convened at a critical moment for the international community. We welcome and applaud the agreement that Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat reached at the summit meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh to put an end to the violence. We thank President Clinton for his determined efforts to contain the crisis and to bring the peace process back on track, and we applaud President Mubarak for his strenuous efforts to the same end. We highly appreciate the tenacious mediation efforts made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and our appreciation goes also to King Abdullah and to the European Union High Representative, Mr. Solana.

It is of crucial importance that each side implement the agreement without waiting for the other to do the same. Japan calls upon both sides to abide by the agreement to restore calm throughout the region as soon as possible. It is also imperative for the international community to support and encourage the implementation of the agreement.

The situation we have witnessed during the past three weeks has indeed been deplorable. Violent clashes have claimed the lives of more than 100 people, most of them civilians, some of them innocent children. Japan deplored the escalating violence in Jerusalem and other areas and condemned all acts of provocation, any form of violence and the excessive use of force. We strongly urged all the parties concerned to do their utmost to put an end to the violence and to exercise utmost restraint.

Having witnessed the tragedies of the last few weeks, we sincerely hope that an environment will be restored as soon as possible in which all Israelis and Palestinians can live in peace.

The current crisis underscores yet again the need for a negotiated settlement, which is the only viable option. We therefore call upon the parties concerned to make every effort to rebuild mutual confidence and to resume the peace process as soon as possible. To that end, we must help the agreement reached in Sharm El-Sheikh work. Japan, for its part, is ready to extend all possible assistance.

Mr. Hasan (Iraq) *(spoke in Arabic)*: The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed great successes in the efforts of the international community and the United Nations in the area of decolonization and of an ending the remnants of foreign occupation. But there is one exception in which developments have gone against the logic of history: namely the continued Zionist occupation of Palestinian territories. This occupation has been coupled with intensive emigration to Palestine by persons of different nationalities, prompted by religious myths.

Excessive force and intimidation were used to compel the Palestinians to leave their homes and their land. This occupation and colonization has been accompanied by consistent recourse to force against Palestinian civilians, the most recent manifestation of which was the violence used by the occupying forces against Palestinians in the Al-Aqsa intifada. That violence came as a response to the desecration of Al-Haram Al-Sharif by the terrorist Ariel Sharon on 28 September 2000, in an act of provocation that incensed not only the Palestinians but all Arabs and Muslims as well.

The use of military force by the occupying Power left more than 100 Palestinians dead and over 3,000 wounded. This bloody repression of the Palestinian people has engulfed all Palestinian cities and villages, from Lot, Ramallah and Haifa to Hebron, Nablus and Jerusalem, in grave violation of the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War. The actions of the Zionist occupying forces are war crimes and crimes against humanity.

In addition, the occupying authorities have imposed a full siege on all Palestinian villages and cities, depriving them of basic necessities such as medicine and food. It seems that siege has become the principal manifestation of the policies of the United States and its surrogate, Israel. The occupation forces thought that by using force and starvation they would be able to break the political will of the Arab nation and the Palestinian people. They thought also that creating new facts on the ground would make it easier for the occupied to accept the occupation. However, they are mistaken. The uprising by the Palestinian and Arab peoples and the solidarity shown by the peoples of Islamic nations, and all nations of the world, is clear testimony to this effect. But sooner or later the aggressors will be defeated, and Palestine will be Arab and free again.

The Security Council considered the Israeli aggression against Palestinian civilians and, after great hesitation and the threat of the use of the veto by the representative of the United States, the Council adopted resolution 1322 (2000), which really does not provide even the minimum response required of the Security Council in the face of this major threat to international peace and security and of the massacres committed by the forces of the Zionist occupation before the eyes of the whole world.

Modest as they are, the steps mentioned in that resolution were not implemented. No committee has been established to investigate the Israeli massacres, which the Council was unable to stop. On the contrary, the Zionist forces escalated their bombing of Palestinian villages and cities, and when the international community insisted that the Security Council take immediate action to ensure the implementation of its resolution, the American representative announced in the Council and to the press that he would veto any draft resolution to be presented to the Security Council.

Mr. Fall (Guinea), Vice-President, took the Chair.

At that point, the Arab Group had to request the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to consider the grave situation in the occupied Palestinian territories. The Non-Aligned Movement also supported the Arab request and proved once again its loyalty and its strong defence of its principles and values. The General Assembly is called upon to deal with this grave threat to regional and international peace and security and to treat it with the seriousness that it deserves. The General Assembly should contribute, even if only modestly, to correcting the historical mistake and to putting matters back on the right track.

Mr. Valdés (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): The distressing acts of violence that have been taking place since 28 September in the occupied territories and Israel require us to gather here at this emergency special session of the General Assembly.

We thought that in the Middle East it had become possible to overcome the language of hatred and violence and that the process was moving — clearly, not without difficulties — towards an acceptable, just

resolution of the prolonged conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. But that was not to be, and in recent days we have witnessed events that have caused more than 100 deaths — most of them Palestinian — as well as injury, destruction and hatred.

The moving images of recent days remain engraved on our consciousness: the little Palestinian boy who was shot dead at his father's side; the two Israeli soldiers killed by a mob; the confrontations between those who responded with bullets to those who threw stones; and the attempt to destroy a site that was sacred to a people. These images show how violence engenders further violence and intolerance.

What is clear is that all that has happened makes it more necessary than ever for negotiations to begin again so that peace can prevail in the Middle East once and for all. That is the only path that remains available to the Israelis and Palestinians if they wish to ensure a viable future for their children and their children's children.

In order to achieve peace, it is essential for both parties to recognize that they must live together and that tolerance and respect for each other must be the basis for coexistence. We believe that this is possible, because not long ago something happened that we had thought impossible: the process that began in Oslo.

Chile reiterates its fervent appeal to all the parties involved to take urgent measures to prevent all acts of force that could aggravate the situation in the area and to allow as soon as possible the re-establishment of conditions to facilitate the pursuit of peace efforts.

To this end, Chile would like to recall the principles that govern its own foreign policy and that are applicable to the emergency in the Middle East: the peaceful resolution of disputes; respect for relevant Security Council resolutions, in this case resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973) and 1322 (2000); the protection of human life, especially the lives of civilians; and the right of both Israelis and Palestinians to live within secure, internationally recognized borders.

We cannot fail to highlight and express our gratitude for the steps taken by President Bill Clinton of the United States aimed at enabling the region to return to normalcy and the peace talks to resume; for the constructive attitude of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, who hosted the recent Sharm el-Sheikh summit; and for the intensive activities undertaken by the Secretary-General in the area.

We hope that, through the agreement reached last Tuesday, the hostilities will immediately be brought to an end, that the committee agreed to under the Sharm el-Sheikh accord will be established to investigate the causes and the facts of the violence that has so powerfully shaken the occupied territories and Israel, and that a climate will be restored under which both parties can return to the negotiating table.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil): My delegation endorses the statement made by Colombia on behalf of the Rio Group. I wish to express my appreciation to the President for convening this important meeting.

The proportions of this tragedy and its consequences for international security indeed require a discussion of the issue by the General Assembly. No one can be indifferent to the sad events and the escalation of the confrontations in the Middle East. The Brazilian Government deeply deplores the outbreak of violence that has engulfed the Palestinian territories over recent days and cannot but condemn the excessive use of force that has led to a spiral of senseless acts of brutality. We strongly urge both sides to bring this bloodshed to a halt.

Ever since this question was placed on the agenda of the United Nations, Brazil has consistently advocated a peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict. We strongly believe that this lofty goal presupposes, among other essential elements, the full realization of the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people to self-determination, as well as the implementation of the pertinent resolutions of the United Nations concerning Jerusalem.

At this particular juncture, we appeal to the peoples and the Governments of the region to exercise restraint and to gather the required political will in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace.

It is of particular concern that those two weeks of tragedy and suffering came at a time when the international community had high hopes that negotiation and understanding would prevail. Brazil regrets that the many diplomatic efforts in recent months, and the recent calls for restraint, have not produced the desired effect. We nurture the hope that the recent Sharm el-Sheikh understanding will create

an atmosphere for reflection and lead to the resumption of meaningful negotiations.

Brazil commends and strongly supports Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his efforts in trying to reduce tensions. In the present circumstances, it is even more urgent that the United Nations, in accordance with its purposes and principles, play a more decisive role in the Middle East. International law must be enforced and negotiations must be resumed. We urge Israeli and Palestinian leaders to heed the appeals of the international community in this debate and take all necessary steps in order to create the conditions necessary for the resumption of the peace process. International support and popular confidence are to be achieved by peace, not confrontation.

The only way to produce mutually beneficial, lasting results, is through negotiation, constructive dialogue and respect for agreements. Peace is achievable. The Oslo process, the progress in the past year and the recent demonstrations of flexibility prove that a better future can be built on dialogue. Acts of violence will not further anyone's cause. It is our expectation that this debate will prompt those in a position to do so to put an end to violence. All the peoples of the region deserve an environment of political freedom, peace and stability, where they can concentrate their strength on prosperity and social and economic development. Brazil remains prepared to contribute in any way we can in order to help to achieve this goal.

Mr. Al-Hussein (Jordan) *(spoke in Arabic)*: At the beginning of this statement, may I convey my earnest congratulations to United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his good offices and praise his efforts during the Sharm el-Sheikh summit. We hope that that summit will help to restore the situation that prevailed in the occupied Palestinian territories before the recent acts of violence.

Reconvening the tenth special emergency session to consider the continuing deteriorating situation in the occupied Palestinian territories shows the Assembly's high interest in the situation and how aware it is of the seriousness of the recent explosive events, the consequences of which are incalculable. His Majesty the King has cautioned the international community about the dangers menacing the peace process. Events show the need for peace, for restoring the rights of the Palestinian people and for freeing them from injustice and occupation, under which they have suffered for so long.

The Government of the Kingdom of Jordan condemns the situation in the occupied territories, the acts of repression and atrocious crimes perpetrated against Palestinian citizens and the destruction of Palestinian property. We share the regret expressed by the Palestinian Authority over the killing of the two Israeli soldiers in Ramallah last week. We also share the view that there should be an inquiry into the incident, and we hope that Israel will also proceed towards an investigation of the massacre of Palestinian citizens over the last two weeks. Victims should enjoy protection in accordance with the Geneva Conventions and the Additional Protocols. These massacres should not only be condemned but should also be the subject of a serious, comprehensive investigation so that judicial proceedings might be taken against those responsible for these crimes. The Government of Jordan urges Israel immediately to put an end to acts of violence, to proceed with the implementation of the agreements concluded and of the relevant Security Council resolutions, and to withdraw its troops as soon as possible from the territories and cities that are under the Palestinian Authority.

The prevailing situation in the occupied territories is a logical consequence of extremism and provocative acts perpetrated by forces that refuse to work for peace in Palestine, thereby hurting the sensibilities of Arab peoples and inciting their anger. The Jordanian Prime Minister has said that if we let fanaticism and extremism continue, we will have more extremism. This would destroy any possibility for negotiation and dialogue, which are the only effective ways to reach the just, lasting and comprehensive peace to which we all aspire.

My Government urges the Israeli Government to shoulder its responsibilities in this critical situation at this decisive stage of the peace process. It should put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people, especially that caused by acts committed by fanatics, who only provide an obstacle to any settlement, thus giving rise to more hate, aggression and conflict.

Jordan, represented by His Highness, the Government and people, reaffirms its solidarity with the Palestinians in their struggle for their legitimate rights and for the right to establish their own

independent State on their national soil, with Jerusalem as its capital. In this context, I would like, on behalf of my Government, to convey my most sincere condolences to the Palestinian Authority and the Palestinian people for the innocent martyred deaths they have incurred during the violence.

Mr. Buallay (Bahrain) *(spoke in Arabic)*: More than 20 days have passed since the start of the intifadah of Al-Aqsa after Ariel Sharon entered Al-Haram Al-Sharif, provoking the feelings of Palestinians, Arabs and Muslims the world over. Regrettably, despite all diplomatic efforts during the past weeks, the Israeli Government still insists on its policy -- namely, the use of excessive force against the intifadah. Not one day passes without more Palestinian martyrs falling; their number has exceeded 100. Still, the international community has not risen up to its responsibilities. Every effort must be made to stop Israeli military actions and end the suffering of the Palestinians.

The resumption of this tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly aims at stopping Israel's grave violations in the occupied Arab territories, which raised the indignation of the whole world and which were recently confirmed by the Commission on Human Rights in Geneva. Images of children killed by Israel's guns and rockets are still in our minds. From this rostrum, we call for the prosecution of those who committed this crime in an international court, so that they get what they deserve for such crimes against children and humanity.

It is really surprising and amazing to have listened to the Israeli representative last Wednesday in the General Assembly when he spoke about the killing of two Israeli soldiers from the *musta'ribeen* unit and depicted it as a great tragedy. We, in turn, ask: what were those two soldiers doing in the occupied land, especially under those circumstances? Everybody knows that this unit has always entered freely into Palestinian areas and villages to commit brutal acts against defenceless civilians whose only aim is to get rid of Israeli occupation. Palestinians lose martyrs everyday — dozens of Palestinians have been killed in the last few days. This is in addition to hundreds of injured people who were distributed to various hospitals in neighbouring countries.

Some people try to confuse and mislead others about events in Palestine. But these attempts will never succeed. We are in a technologically advanced world; that is why any attempts at blurring the facts will not be successful. You cannot compare the victim with the victimizer. You cannot compare those who throw stones with those who use helicopter gunships, tanks and rockets. You cannot compare the enemy who occupies the land by force with the one who is trying to get rid of this occupation.

We simply would like to ask what the real problem in the Middle East is. Have the Palestinians occupied Israeli land and displaced Israel's population and done whatever they wanted in it?

Everyone knows the problem. Why, then, do we not take radical steps to solve this problem? The problem is in the continuation of the Israeli occupation of the occupied Arab territories, whether in Palestine, the Syrian Golan or the remaining Lebanese territory under Israeli occupation. The solution lies in the total witndrawal of Israel from these territories. If we want this crisis to end and to achieve regional stability, all the Arab territories occupied by Israel must be freed. Then, and only then, will we have a solution.

In conclusion, we call on the international community to put all manner of pressure on Israel, the occupying Power, to force it to withdraw from all occupied Arab territory, so that the Palestinians can live in security and peace after having suffered greatly, and so that they may establish their independent State on their national soil, with Jerusalem as its capital.

Mr. De Saram (Sri Lanka): Sri Lanka has always considered the question of Palestine to be at the core of the concerns of the region. Sri Lanka has consistently supported the Palestinian people in their endeavours to realize their national inalienable rights. Sri Lanka believes that all States of the region have the right to live in peace within secure and internationally recognized borders. Sri Lanka shared the satisfaction of the international community over the progress that, despite delays and obstacles, was being made in the peace process.

Tragic events, and overwhelmingly shocking events, have, however, taken place in the occupied territories. They have caused the convening of the Security Council and the convening of the General Assembly in emergency special session. They have required the urgent meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh.

Where deep human emotions are in conflict, as they are and have been for much too long in the

occupied territories; where frustration and hopelessness prevail, as has been the case for much too long in the occupied territories; where tensions are always close to dangerous and explosive levels, as has happened far too often in the occupied territories — then, if violence is not to erupt and engulf all, sensitivity and thoughtfulness are the essential, overarching and all-encompassing requirements. To all those whose loved ones were killed in the violent conflagrations, may I convey the most heartfelt sympathies and condolences.

For the convening of the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting, with the participation of Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat, great praise is due to President Clinton, President Mubarak, King Abdullah and the Secretary-General, who reported this afternoon most usefully to this General Assembly on the meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh, as well as to the European Union Commissioner Solana. The meeting at Sharm el-Sheikh was convened to restore calm to the region, in the hope that the tattered remnants of the peace process — a peace process for which so many had such high hopes — might eventually be put together again, made whole and, hopefully, lead before too long to the just, comprehensive and lasting peace, long awaited by all the peoples of the region and the international community as a whole. Let us hope and pray that all concerned will now take the steps that are necessary to assist the peace process along.

Sri Lanka is the Chair of the General Assembly's Special Committee on Israeli practices affecting the human rights of the Palestinian people and other Arabs of the occupied territories. Regarding the events that took place in recent weeks in the occupied territories, the Special Committee has requested me, as its Chair, to convey to the General Assembly at this emergency special session today its great concern and great distress at the apparent magnitude of force with which the Israelis acted in situations of unrest, and the consequential severe violations of human rights: the large number of Palestinians killed and wounded, including many who were very, very young; the nature of the military weaponry deployed and utilized by the Israelis; the general closures or "sealing-off" of Palestinian territories, with severe hardship to Palestinians in general within the areas closed or sealed; and the general, and often complete, restriction on Palestinian movement in the occupied territories.

The Special Committee continues to be of the view that the entire system of occupation of the Palestinian territories, having regard also to the long duration of the occupation, constitutes a general violation of the human rights of the Palestinians of the occupied territories. It is of the greatest importance, therefore, that Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat return as speedily as possible to the peace process, notwithstanding the enormous wounds that both peoples, the Israelis and the Palestinians, have suffered as a result of the very, very sad and troubling occurrences of the past three weeks.

Mr. Khurana (India): We thank you, Mr. President, for calling this important meeting.

On 18 October, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement, the Chair of the Movement made a statement with which we associate ourselves.

We would also like to share briefly with this body our sentiments on this important issue, which has been a matter of serious concern for the entire international community.

As a country that has all along had a deep belief and interest in the cause of justice and peace in the Middle East and which has made such contributions as it could, India is convinced of the need for dialogue and peaceful negotiations to find a just, comprehensive and lasting settlement of all issues between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. We have therefore watched with very deep concern and consternation the recent incidents of violence which have erupted in Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and other parts of the territories under the control of the Palestinian National Authority and Israel. There have been deliberate acts of provocation, excessive use of force and violations of basic human rights, including the right to life. The international community has watched with increasing anxiety the escalation in violence and the enormous loss of innocent lives. Particularly shocking and poignant has been the large number of casualties among children. The Government of India has expressed its deep condolences to the families of those killed and reiterated its readiness to extend all possible assistance to the Palestinian people. To provide urgently required relief, the Government of India has decided to airlift medical supplies to the Palestine Red Crescent Society.

The spiral in violence has vitiated the atmosphere of the Middle East peace process. The overriding need of the hour is restraint, avoidance of provocation, and the shunning of the use of force or encouragement to

violence or indeed to any act which could exacerbate tensions, resulting in further loss of innocent lives. This alone can ensure the restoration of peace and calm. At the same time, an impartial and objective assessment of these developments will help both in the context of violations of human rights that have occurred and to learn lessons for the future.

There had been considerable progress in the peace process between the Palestinian and the Israeli sides. The events of the last few days should not be allowed to retard or delay the peace process, for which the leaders of Palestine and Israel have striven so hard. Together over the years, they have come a long way on the road to peace — a one-way journey from which there cannot and should not be any going back. We believe that, given the required will and determination and the commitment to resolving issues peacefully, no odds are insurmountable, no goals too far. Violence has to be abjured.

In our statement in the Security Council's open meeting on this issue on 4 October, our delegation said that diplomacy and statesmanship have to triumph. This is beginning to happen. It is our sincere hope that the outcome of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit will put an end to violence and pave the way to the negotiating table. We appreciate the tireless efforts made by Secretary-General Kofi Annan and others to bring the violence to an end and to encourage the two sides back to the path of the search for a lasting and just peace.

For the people of Israel and Palestine, destined to live as neighbours, peace is not an option; there is no alternative and no other way but this.

Miss Durrant (Jamaica): My delegation deeply regrets the events that have necessitated the convening of this emergency special session of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly has, over the years, continuously encouraged an end to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through an active negotiating process which takes into account the right to security of all States in the region, including Israel, as well as the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people. Over the years, there have also been many commendable initiatives aimed at achieving this goal, within the United Nations as well as by individual States and regional organizations.

The situation in the Middle East continues to require our collective action in order to remove all threats to international peace, to prevent breaches of the peace and to bring about a comprehensive settlement of the dispute. Jamaica subscribes to the view that it is only through negotiation that a lasting solution can be found. We have therefore deplored the violence that erupted in Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza and the excessive use of force against Palestinian civilians, which unfortunately resulted in the tragic loss of so many lives. We must express our sincere sympathy and condolences to the families of all the bereaved on both sides.

The outbreak of violence has come at a time when strenuous efforts were being made to bring peace to the region and at a critical juncture, when the leaders of both Israel and Palestine were engaged in negotiations. We are therefore concerned about the destabilizing effects that the recent violence has had on the peace process.

Jamaica fully supports Security Council resolution 1322 (2000), adopted on 7 October, and calls for full compliance of the parties with its provisions. We urge the parties to refrain from the use of force and provocative acts, which only serve to undermine the peace process, and we appeal to them to take immediate steps to create the necessary environment for a restoration of peace, stability and the continuation of talks leading to a comprehensive, just and lasting peace based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

My delegation wishes to take this opportunity to commend Secretary-General Kofi Annan for his tireless diplomatic efforts, which resulted in a commitment by the parties to resolve their differences by peaceful means. The activities of the Secretary-General have demonstrated that the United Nations cannot absent itself from the search for peace in the Middle East. It is therefore imperative that the Secretary-General remain involved.

We also applaud the leadership shown by the President of Egypt and the President of the United States at the Sharm el-Sheikh summit and hope that the agreements reached on security cooperation, on renewing the peace process and on fact-finding will be fully and speedily implemented. We must now concentrate our efforts towards building on the progress made to restore calm in the region. It is of

critical importance that the best possible atmosphere be created for the resumption of the peace talks.

Too many people have been killed and too many people maimed. For the sake of the people in the region, there must be a restoration of confidence in the peace process. We must break the cycle of distrust if we are to reach a time when Palestinians and Israelis can coexist in peace and mutual security.

The Acting President: I should like to inform members that after we have heard all the speakers we shall proceed to take action on the draft resolution contained in document A/ES-10/L.6, which was circulated earlier.

Mr. Zackheos (Cyprus): At this late hour, I have seen fit to shorten my prepared text.

Since the beginning of the recent bloody clashes the Cyprus Government and people have expressed sorrow and concern over the escalating tension and the loss of so many lives. Cyprus has also expressed the view that the visit to the Al-Haram Al-Sharif compound in Jerusalem constituted a provocation which should have been avoided, especially during such a critical period in the Middle East peace process.

My Government welcomes Security Council resolution 1322 (2000), adopted last Saturday, and calls for its immediate implementation. We also welcome the results of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit. We pay tribute to the efforts of Presidents Mubarak and Clinton, King Abdullah II, the United Nations Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, and the High Representative of the European Union, Javier Solana, as well as to the political will and courage displayed by the two leaders, Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat. We attach great importance to the implementation of the commitments by both sides. We therefore express regret at today's deterioration of the situation, which resulted in nine more dead Palestinians.

Bearing in mind the efforts of the last seven years by the international community, in which Cyprus had its own share, in encouraging the parties on the difficult road to peace and reconciliation in the Middle East, we cannot but express our concern over these negative developments. Time and again Cyprus has stated that the Palestinian issue constitutes the core of the Middle East conflict, and that without its settlement the international community cannot hope to reach a comprehensive and lasting solution to the Middle East problem. We reiterate our support for a just and lasting settlement of the Arab and Israeli conflict based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

A lesson drawn from the recent escalation of violence is that unless peace efforts and initiatives are based on international law the achievement of peace will remain on very shaky grounds. Solutions to problems must be perceived as fair and accepted as such by the populations concerned; otherwise, the sense of resentment and opposition will sweep away agreements reached based on ephemeral considerations.

Another point I would like to make is that the absence of a solution to the Middle East problem leads to instability, due to the continuing frustration of the Palestinian people, who long to achieve their legitimate rights and live in peace and dignity. At the same time, we believe that security for all States is a necessary component of peace in the region. The recent violence does not serve the interest of either party to the conflict and should stop immediately. We deplore any actions that do not respect the sanctity of human life. Religious sites should be respected. Innocent children must be protected. We also call for respect for the legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention.

In conclusion I express my hope that the numerous difficulties, however daunting, will not deter the drive towards peace. We support all international initiatives and efforts to bring peace and stability to our region. Cyprus has already conveyed to the parties its readiness to host any meeting or to offer any other assistance that they deem appropriate. We join the international community in expressing our hope that the situation will soon return to normalcy and that efforts will be redoubled for the survival and ultimate successful outcome of the peace process upon which millions of people, both in the region and throughout the world, have placed their hopes.

Mr. Wehbe (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The convening of this tenth emergency special session has a special purpose. It was convened because the Security Council was unable to meet due to one country's threat to use the veto against any draft resolution brought before the Council, despite the fact that paragraph 8 of the latest resolution adopted by the

Council, resolution 1322 (2000) of 7 October, says that the Council will follow the situation closely and remain seized of the matter.

Regrettably, the Council is unable to assume its responsibilities under the Charter. This prompted the Arab League and the Coordinating Bureau of the Non-Aligned Movement to seek this special session under the banner "United for peace" as a way to awaken the world conscience and to support the Palestinian people, who face aggression and brutal massacres at the hands of the Israeli forces and settlers.

Before I arrived to make this statement, television stations talked about 10 more Palestinian martyrs who fell today, joining the martyrs in the massacres perpetrated by the Israeli forces during the past three weeks. The pictures of the killing of the child, the martyr Mohammed Jamal Al-Durra, and other children that shook the conscience of the whole world did not really touch the feelings of the Israeli Government. On the contrary, the Israeli forces continued their racism and again shot a young man. After he fell dead, the Israeli forces fired two more bullets at his body.

We have all heard that Israel is using helicopter gunships, missiles, tanks and every sort of weapon against a defenceless people that only wants to protest against the aggression. In the last few days, Israel almost declared all-out war against the Palestinian people, with a view to making it surrender and accept the Israeli peace terms. It killed children, women and the elderly, closing crossing points, blockading Palestinian cities and inciting the Israeli settlers to play a role, in coordination with the Israeli forces, to commit aggression against the defenceless Palestinians.

The tragic events in the occupied Palestinian territories have proved once again Israel's aggressive, racist nature and that it does not want peace. This stands as a clear contradiction to one of the terms it accepted on becoming a Member of the United Nations.

The picture of Israel in the Arab street is one of a racist expansionist entity that finds pleasure in occupation. Israel kills children, destroys houses, tries to impose hegemony on the whole region, prevents progress and development and undermines Arab economies. In this respect, we can say that Israeli provocation and the escalating aggressive spirit that it has displayed in the past few weeks even affected the Israeli Arabs of 1948. It crossed the so-called green line in using excessive force against those whom it considers citizens. It burned their houses, threatened their children, and more than 10 of them fell victim to this aggression. This begs the question: How can a settler in the West Bank or Gaza enter Israel proper and fire upon those who are considered citizens of Israel? How can the Israeli Government allow this? This makes it imperative that the international community decide who was responsible and how it could have happened. This is what world conscience and the international community must be aware of.

Israeli acts of aggression and provocation during the past few weeks have led to the convening of the Security Council. The Council adopted a resolution condemning the act of provocation that took place in the Al-Haram Al-Sharif in Jerusalem. It denounced the Israeli aggression in Jerusalem and in other territories occupied since 1967. The Council condemned the excessive use of force by Israel against the Palestinians. These acts led to anger on Arab streets in solidarity with their Palestinian brothers who in full faith are defending themselves, their shrines, their dignity, their land and their rights.

What can we conclude from these bloodletting, painful events?

First, Israel is trying to impose conditions on the Palestinian people to achieve peace on its own terms.

Secondly, Israel uses threats against Syria and Lebanon to escalate the tension in the area and to kill any chances for peace.

Thirdly, Israel ignores the need to stop the escalation while it bears responsibility for the escalation and tension in the area.

Fourthly, it takes advantage of the fact that the Security Council, which has the power to implement its resolutions and the Charter of the United Nations, has become a silent witness to the deadlock in the peace process in the Middle East.

Fifthly, Israel challenges the resolutions of international legitimacy, the Geneva Conventions and international humanitarian law, as well as the latest resolution of the Security Council. It even challenges the understandings recently reached at Sharm el-Sheikh. This is confirmed by the fact that 10 martyrs fell today — after Sharm el-Sheikh. This is the saddest day since the uprising of Al-Aqsa on 28 September in the wake of the provocative visit by Ariel Sharon.

This demonstrates once again that Israel does not comply with any resolution, agreement or understanding reached, which thereby undermines the peace process.

Israel alone bears full responsibility for escalating tension in the region. It bears full responsibility for its practices of genocide against the defenceless Palestinian people and for instability in the Middle East, thus making the region a picture of injustice that the whole world looks at and sees that Israel is responsible for all the violations that have taken place during the past three weeks.

The peace process, which has been severely wounded, will die if there is no radical change in the approach taken by the international community; an approach that would restore right and justice and would end injustice, aggression and oppression; an approach that would eliminate Israeli occupation of all Arab territories. The international community must stop Israeli aggression. It must force Israel, with all available means under the Charter, to respect the rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab people in the occupied territories.

In this context, Mr. Al-Shara', the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Syria, said in the regular session of the General Assembly that the continued occupation by Israel of the Arab territories, under the pretext of its need for security and other myths, is the basic obstacle to peace.

These Israeli pretexts have transformed the peace process into an endless process of negotiations.

Israel must realize a perfectly clear fact — achieving a just and comprehensive peace requires serious and honest political will. In order for this peace to be achieved, Israel must implement Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973) and the principle of land for peace. It must completely withdraw from the Palestinian territories, including Jerusalem, and restore undiminished Palestinian sovereignty over Jerusalem, including Al-Haram Al-Sharif.

This would also mean a complete withdrawal from the occupied Syrian Golan to the line of 4 June 1967 without prevarication or delays and implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978) on Lebanon.

Syria denounces the Israeli aggression against the defenceless Arab Palestinian people and the attempt to force them to accept peace on Israel's own terms. Syria supports the Palestinian people in its legitimate struggle to restore its legitimate rights and to establish its independent State on its national soil, with Jerusalem as its capital.

This emergency special session is called upon to denounce and deplore the Israeli aggression against the Palestinian Arab people and the religious shrines in Palestine. Israel must bear full responsibility for the serious situation in Palestine and at the Lebanese borders. This session must adopt measures to force Israel to respect international law, international conventions and to implement the relevant United Nations resolutions.

In conclusion, the bloodshed of the Palestinian Arab people will not be in vain; and the salvation of Palestinian Arabs and other Arab citizens is dependent on the conscience and sense of justice of the international community to help achieve a just and comprehensive peace, security and dignity for all, as well as the elimination of tension and instability. This is what all Arabs in the region want. I wish to reaffirm that, because of its history and location, the will of the Palestinian people, the resolutions of international legality and United Nations resolutions, Jerusalem is Arab. Jerusalem is occupied and must be returned to the Palestinian people to become the capital of Palestine where the Palestinians can exercise full sovereignty over it.

Mr. Snoussi (Morocco) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, the delegation of the Kingdom of Morocco wishes to warmly thank you, Mr. President, for having called for the resumption of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly to examine a very serious, difficult problem that presents a number of dangers to Al-Quds, to Palestine and to the occupied territories.

We were very moved by the account presented by our Secretary-General and we wish to pay tribute to him for his courage, perspicacity and will to ensure that the international community contributes to the commendable efforts for peace and the end of violence.

Great hope was born following the Sharm el-Sheikh summit and the admirable endeavours of President Clinton and President Mubarak. On behalf of the injured and the mourning, we wish to thank them.

Each of our countries has tried to provide assistance and comfort and to express its solidarity. However, this will, unfortunately, not immediately relieve the pain of those who have lost their children and their parents, who have fallen victims to the bullets of a blind army and police force. Today we are shaken by the renewed violence and by the fact that it has not yet been possible to establish full peace. The injuries inflicted on the brave Palestinian people will take a long time to heal. Today the victims of this catastrophe have been blamed, but the international community knows very well what has happened, and Israel, particularly groups in Israel that recently struggled to enable Oslo to exist, recognizes the catastrophe triggered by the calculations of a man who is, to say the least, irresponsible. We have let folly prevail and are surprised today to see the fury of a people.

We hope that wisdom will prevail over these regrettable and unforgivable events. It is imperative that Israel have the courage to restore honour to the world, for it is well aware of our traditions, for no one is entitled to sacrifice the future of two peoples — the Israelis and the Palestinians — and to trigger the irreversible and unforgivable in the Muslim and Arab world as well.

A decision was taken to establish a joint committee. It must be done quickly because tomorrow it will be too late. The withdrawal of tanks to erase the image of war unleashed on unarmed children was also decided. That too must be done without delay. These measures must be accompanied by a lot of patience and perseverance. Israel must show once and for all whether or not it wants peace. It can still do this. Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and Security Council resolution 338 (1973) clearly define the framework for a just and lasting peace. This is perhaps a last opportunity. Our Palestinian brothers, who are trying to heal their wounds and are mourning their dead, and who have shown in the past enough courage and great spirit, will know, if their dignity is protected and they are not humiliated daily, how to resume the path of peace.

We express our great hope that Palestine will rediscover its glory and its people will find once again the path of honour and happiness. On behalf of my Government and His Majesty Mohammed VI, I wish to reiterate our full support for the Palestinian people and what they have experienced.

Mr. Erwa (Sudan) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, the Sudanese delegation wishes to thank you, Sir, for agreeing to hold the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly on the illegal Israeli acts committed in Palestine and the occupied Arab territories.

First I wish to thank the Secretary-General for his constructive initiative, his participation in this important session and the useful information he provided.

This special session is held at a time when brutal crimes against the Palestinian people are being committed in the wake of Ariel Sharon's visit to desecrate the land of Palestine and the bloodletting events that led to the victimization of people praying at Al-Aqsa Mosque. This was a provocation to Arab and Muslim sentiments and was another expansionist act carried out by Israel, which tries to create a de facto situation that will render Palestinian-Israeli final status talks completely irrelevant and baseless. That visit exposes the falseness of Israeli claims on the question of sovereignty over Jerusalem, which is vitally important to all Palestinians and all Arabs, Christians and Muslims.

Since the last week of September, developments in the occupied territories and the killing of Palestinians have been blatant violations of the Fourth Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949. This Convention applies to all territories occupied by Israel since 1967. These developments reveal the current Israeli Government's support for and approval of provocative acts of aggression against defenceless Palestinians, acts of torture, intimidation and killing taking place before the international community. These are unconscionable acts.

Sudan strongly condemns the massacre at Al-Haram Al-Sharif, which claimed hundreds of martyrs and wounded victims — Palestinian men, women and children. The victims of Israeli bullets continue to fall as we meet at this emergency special session. While the ink on the Sharm el-Sheikh memorandum of understanding has yet to dry, the Palestinian people continue to offer up their lives as martyrs, one after another.

The delegation of Sudan trusts that the General Assembly will assume its full responsibility with regard to the heinous crimes being perpetrated against

the Palestinian people. The Assembly should protect Palestinians from the torture and killing they are subjected to at the hands of Israeli forces that employ the most advanced and lethal weapons. The Assembly must act now that the Security Council has failed to take the necessary measures to stop the killing of defenceless Palestinians because of the threat of using the veto by a permanent member of the Council — a country that should have implemented the principles of international law to achieve peace and justice in the region, by virtue of its sponsorship of the peace process. That country is not supposed to take sides in the conflict.

Sudan calls upon the General Assembly to force Israel to implement resolutions of international legality, in particular resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), and to force it to withdraw completely from occupied Arab territories in Palestine and the Syrian Golan and the still occupied parts of southern Lebanon. In this regard, Sudan supports the draft resolution the Assembly intends to adopt at the end of this session. That draft resolution would send Israel a strong message about the importance of respecting the rules of international law. Sudan will vote in favour of that draft resolution.

In conclusion, Sudan would like to extend its heartfelt condolences to the families of the heroic Palestinian martyrs who fell victim to the latest Israeli acts of aggression and injustice. We reaffirm our full solidarity with the Palestinian people and other Arabs in their struggle to liberate their lands and to protect their dignity and Holy Places.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway deeply regrets the loss of life and suffering that have been caused by the unrest of the past few weeks. We are horrified by the unacceptable deaths of innocent civilians, including children, and by the high incidence of injuries. Norway deplores all acts of violence and the indiscriminate use of force. It is with the greatest concern that we notice that in some places the unrest is still going on, and that voices are still being heard in favour of continued violence.

The events over the last few weeks have revealed the frustrations and distrust that exist between Israel and the Palestinians. The work to achieve peace has suffered tremendous setbacks. It will be very difficult to overcome the animosity and distrust that has ruled the scene. Nevertheless, it is now important to search for common ground in order to return to the negotiating table.

Norway believes that the understanding reached at the Sharm el-Sheikh summit represents an important step towards rebuilding the peace process. The fact-finding commission must be impartial and have as its primary goal to work towards healing the wounds. The provisions for a ceasefire and an end to the violence must be strictly adhered to.

Norway urgently calls for an end to all hostilities and for the implementation of measures aimed at diffusing tension. The parties must refrain from all activities that can instigate new violence. Israel, with its military might, has a special responsibility to show restraint. The Palestinian leadership should do its utmost to prevent demonstrations from becoming violent.

The confrontation over the last few weeks has not only undermined the peace process, but economic and social development as well. Norway, as the Chairman of the Ad Hoc Liaison Committee and as a major donor to the development of the Palestinian area, is gravely concerned about the long-term implications of the conflict on the ongoing work to develop the Palestinian economy and to improve economic and social conditions.

It is essential that the international community now take advantage of the understanding reached at Sharm el-Sheikh and support all efforts to rebuild trust between the parties. Continuing the peace process is the only means of ensuring lasting peace and stability in the region. It is therefore of paramount importance to prepare the ground for a resumption of negotiations. We must let the Sharm el-Sheikh agreement work, and avoid all actions that can derail the present fragile process and hinder the resumption of the negotiations.

We must create an atmosphere that is conducive to the resumption of the negotiations. It is Norway's strong hope that the Israelis and the Palestinians will restore their mutual confidence as peace partners, and that the peace process will be continued. Norway welcomes the new and constructive role of the Secretary-General in this regard.

The violence that we have witnessed in recent weeks clearly shows that there are no alternatives to the quest for peace. The tragic events of today underline this even more. The violence is not only a

direct threat to the peace process itself, but to the stability of the whole region. It is our duty to exert all efforts to reach peace for the benefit of Israelis and Palestinians, the region, and the world at large.

Mr. Nakayama (Micronesia): My delegation has listened with sorrow to the many statements made in the General Assembly Hall of the United Nations. If one were to take a tally, clearly there would be more statements in condemnation of one side than there would be those that are objective and helpful. Thus it would seem to the people outside this Hall that United Nations debates on peace issues lack a genuine and sincere intent to soothe the tension in the Middle East and to encourage both sides to talk peace.

The Secretary-General has reported to this body on the conciliatory role he has just played to urge both sides of the conflict to abandon violence and to go back to talking peace. My delegation commends his hard work and dedication to the role that is the United Nations.

We also pay tribute to the President of the United States and the President of Egypt for the critical roles they have played in the peace process.

No one likes violence, and no one condones the loss of life to violence. My Government is sad, and it expresses its deep sympathy to the Israeli people and to the Palestinian people in connection with the loss of life, the injuries and the damage to property. We hope that the recent unfortunate events will once again reinforce the fact that there is no real alternative to lasting peace for any people, anywhere. We support those delegations that have spoken before us urging both sides to make peace.

We would also like to see delegations in this body play a conciliatory role by supporting the peace process, rather than adopt unbalanced resolutions that will only further inflame violence. The United Nations must remain objective and impartial in its relentless work to find lasting peace in the region.

Mr. Aboud (Comoros) (*spoke in French*): This universal body is meeting at a critical and explosive time to consider the illegal occupation of East Jerusalem and other Palestinian territories. My delegation supports the efforts of the Secretary-General, His Excellency Mr. Kofi Annan, and hails his courage in going to the region to serve as a mediator in the current crisis.

Over the past several weeks, the global village — as the Secretary-General described it in his millennium report (A/54/2000) — has been shocked by the terrible images of violence seen on television and in the other media. There can be no justification for the violent acts committed by the Israeli authorities against unarmed Palestinian civilians in the occupied territories. My country, the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros, was disturbed by the Israeli army's escalation of violence against the Palestinian people. In spite of the efforts made to put an end to the violence, the Israeli army this morning shot civilian demonstrators, killing more than five Palestinians. My Government believes that the international community, represented by the United Nations, is duty-bound to establish a commission of inquiry to bring to justice the perpetrators of the violence that has caused the death of more than 100 Palestinians.

Violence and policies against the Palestinians in the occupied territories have undoubtedly created a climate of anxiety in the region and throughout the international community.

(*spoke in English*)

My Government strongly believes that the international community should condemn and take action on the illegal actions committed by the Israeli Government. It believes also that the question of Palestine should remain the responsibility of the United Nations, as the unique universal Organization it is. Moreover, it would request the international community to put pressure on Israel to stop its crimes against children, women and other unarmed Palestinians.

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Comoros, I convey our condolences to the families of the heroes killed by the Israeli Government.

Mr. Neewoor (Mauritius): Just a few weeks ago, we were all on the verge of celebrating the conclusion of an agreement between Israel and the Palestinian Authority that, at long last, would have fulfilled the aspiration of the Palestinian people to live in peace in an independent State of Palestine and that of Israel to exist in peace within secure borders. We had hopes that the last Camp David lap in the negotiations on a final settlement would be completed sooner rather than later by Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Chairman Arafat, who, over a long period of time, had engaged in serious negotiations in sincerity and mutual trust, and who had

crossed so many difficult hurdles. Unfortunately, that was not to be.

Our high hopes were shattered on account of an unwarranted act of provocation on the Israeli side, when they failed to prevent the visit undertaken by Mr. Ariel Sharon and his supporters to the holy shrine of Al-Haram Al-Sharif. The violence which followed as a consequence has not only struck a severe blow to the peace process, but has caused the loss of numerous innocent civilian lives on the Palestinian side, and also of a number of lives on the Israeli side. We deplore the excessive use of force and violence by the Israeli authorities, which has resulted in the killing of innocent civilians. We present our heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims.

But we know that violence only breeds more violence, and that violence is no alternative to the legitimate aspiration of all the peoples of the Middle East to live in peace and security. We call on both parties to adopt a forward-looking attitude and to work collectively within the framework of the recent Sharm el-Sheikh arrangement. We call on both sides to recreate the positive environment of mutual trust and to resume the peace talks. Mauritius firmly believes in the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to live in peace in an independent State of Palestine. That can be achieved only with the speedy implementation of Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973).

We support the proposal for an international inquiry into the acts of violence that have taken place over the past few weeks, as called for by the Security Council last week and by the Sharm el-Sheikh arrangement. Mauritius recognizes the crucial role played by the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan, by President Mubarak of Egypt and by President Clinton in convening the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting, which has revived hope for peace in the Middle East. We encourage them to stay engaged to ensure the early normalization of the situation and the revival of the peace process.

The President: In accordance with General Assembly resolution 48/265 of 24 August 1994, I now call on the observer of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta.

Mr. Linati-Bosch (Sovereign Military Order of Malta): The Sovereign Military Order of Malta, founded in Jerusalem in the eleventh century, is strongly connected with all past and present events in the Holy Land. It flourished there for over two centuries, which explains its political and hospital-related activities and has led to its current presence in Jerusalem, especially in the Bethlehem area.

The Holy Family Hospital, a maternity clinic with over 3,000 deliveries per year, serves the greater Bethlehem area, including Hebron. This activity is conducted through the Holy Land Foundation of the Order of Malta.

There is one word we hear every day: globalization. We hear it or read it in quotations, newspapers, books, speeches and statements. We hear about its benefits and contradictions. It is a word that is usually immediately associated not only with financial problems and economic issues but also with a concern for the increasing threats to the environment and with an excess of information. It means, in fact, that no country can live isolated or marooned.

The concept of globalization can also be applied to conflicts and problems. Political events are also globalized today. When there is a struggle for power, or when differences between communities lead to armed conflicts in different parts of the world, the phenomenon of globalization affects every one of us. It has an impact not only on the part of the world where the conflict is developing but on the international community as well. We must be aware of the problem and of the injustice and calamities that can result from intolerance and misunderstanding.

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta is concerned about the lack of tolerance that exists with respect to human rights and its harsh consequences for civilians, especially women and children — consequences that include displaced persons, refugees, sickness and increasing misery.

Twenty centuries ago, the Christian world, one of the three monotheistic religions represented in the Holy Land, received a message of love, friendship and civility. Today, the international community must renew this message by asking the family of man to live in peace and harmony. There is a natural law — a divine law — and an international law, both of which advise us on the path we should follow: no violence, and commitment to the respect of human rights.

The activity of the United Nations can and must be the platform on which to build a community in the

Holy Land — a community in which differences will be overcome through an understanding that includes financial, legal and technical measures to be implemented through Israeli-Palestinian cooperation. The framework of self-determination, national sovereignty and independence must be respectfully observed as the cornerstone of peaceful development.

Regarding the day-to-day activities of the Order of Malta in the Holy Land, I cannot hide our concern for the security not only of our humanitarian personnel operating in the area, but also of the women being cared for by the Order and the children being born in its hospital. We know that this is no easy task. We do not live in a new world with blank areas on the map. We must consider this developing problem against the backdrop of a land that is a melting pot of religions, peoples, civilizations and interests that seem to be at odds. We can find formulas — in legal doctrines, in historical precedents and under the current rules of international law — to guarantee the legal status and the peaceful development of the peoples involved in the Palestinian problem.

The Sovereign Military Order of Malta wishes to continue its hospital-related work in the Holy Land and, as a consequence, is ready to persist in its offer of humanitarian and financial aid, and even to increase it, as we are currently doing. The diplomacy and hospital-related services of the Order are ready to collaborate with the international community to find a solution to this ongoing violent and onerous conflict.

The President: In accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 10th plenary meeting on 5 February 1999, I now call on the observer of Switzerland.

Mr. Staehelin (Switzerland) *(spoke in French)*: Allow me at the outset to thank the Secretary-General for his statement and for the great personal commitment that he has shown in his action for peace.

The serious events that led to the convening of this emergency special session illustrate clearly the close link between the establishment of a just and lasting peace and respect for international law. All agree in condemning acts of provocation, violence and hatred, whatever their origin. We cannot exploit the suffering of some or ignore that of others.

Basing ourselves on the fundamental principles of humanity, impartiality and universality, we must work to reaffirm and reinforce the essential function of international law and in particular that of international humanitarian law. This will help stem the violence, restore confidence and encourage the resumption of dialogue, which is indispensable.

In this respect, my delegation would like to welcome the efforts of the Secretary-General and of other key players. We share the hope that the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting will enable us to resume and bring to a successful conclusion the peace process in the Middle East.

In order to put an end to the cycle of violence, it is now important that everyone, without condition, refrain from all acts of provocation. We must try to promote tolerance and mutual respect, which are inseparable from peace between peoples.

We solemnly appeal for respect for international humanitarian law. The Swiss Government would like to point out that the 1949 Geneva Conventions were the result of the tragic experience of humanity; they do not set out an ideal, but indicate the threshold below which barbarism begins. These Conventions take into account the imperatives of security. States undertake to respect them and to ensure respect for them in all circumstances. The Fourth Geneva Convention deals with the protection of civilians in times of war. It is applicable *de jure* in the territories occupied by Israel, particularly in those whose annexation has not been recognized by the international community.

As for the draft resolution that has been distributed, we note that paragraph 10 refers directly to the depository of the Fourth Geneva Convention. This paragraph leaves open several questions. If necessary, my authorities will examine the possibilities available to the depository for taking action as requested.

Responsibility for peace and for respecting the law in the Middle East lies first and foremost with the parties to the conflict, but also with the international community, which, in recent years, has spared no effort — political, diplomatic, financial or technological — to facilitate development and stability in the Middle East. Only a peace that guarantees respect for the fundamental rights of the individual can bring this about.

Returning to the negotiating table in conditions of respect and mutual trust and repudiating violence are the only way to find, within the framework of

international law, a lasting solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. We sincerely hope that the recent talks in Sharm el-Sheikh will make it possible to relaunch that process.

The President: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I now give the floor to the representative of Egypt to introduce draft resolution A/ES-10/L.6.

Mr. Aboulgheit (Egypt): I should like to announce that since the publication of the draft resolution, the Comoros and Indonesia have become sponsors.

On behalf of the sponsors, it is my honour to introduce the draft resolution to the General Assembly today at its resumed tenth emergency special session, on the illegal Israeli actions in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory. I will briefly introduce each of the preambular and operative paragraphs of the draft.

The first preambular paragraph reaffirms the resolutions of the tenth emergency special session and the need for their full implementation.

The second preambular paragraph welcomes the Security Council's adoption of Security Council 1322 (2000), stressing the urgent need for full compliance with it.

In the third preambular paragraph, the Assembly expresses its deep concern over the provocative visit to Al-Haram Al-Sharif on 28 September 2000, and the tragic events that followed in occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, which resulted in a high number of deaths and injuries, mostly among Palestinian civilians.

The fourth preambular paragraph expresses deep concern over the clashes between the Israeli army and the Palestinian police and the casualties on both sides.

The fifth preambular paragraph reaffirms that a just a lasting solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict must be based on Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), through an active negotiation process that takes into account the right of security for all States in the region, as well as the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination.

The sixth preambular paragraph expresses support for the peace process and the efforts to reach a final settlement between Israel and the Palestinians, urging the two sides to cooperate in these efforts.

In the seventh preambular paragraph, the Assembly reaffirms the need for full respect by all for the holy places of occupied East Jerusalem and condemns any behaviour to the contrary. Similarly, the eighth preambular paragraph reaffirms the need for full respect by all for the holy places in the rest of the occupied Palestinian territory, as well as in Israel, condemning any behaviour to the contrary.

The ninth preambular paragraph expresses determination to uphold the purposes and principles of the United Nations Charter, international humanitarian law and all other instruments of international law, as well as the relevant General Assembly and Security Council resolutions.

In the tenth preambular paragraph, the Assembly reiterates the permanent responsibility of the United Nations towards the question of Palestine until it is solved in all its aspects.

The eleventh preambular paragraph says that the Assembly is conscious of the serious dangers arising from persistent violations and grave breaches of the Fourth Geneva Convention and the responsibility arising therefrom.

The twelfth preambular paragraph stresses the urgent need for providing protection for Palestinian civilians in the occupied Palestinian territory.

The thirteenth and final preambular paragraph notes the convening, on 15 July 1999, for the first time, of a Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention on measures to enforce the Convention on the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and welcomes the statement adopted by the participating High Contracting parties.

I should now like to turn to the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution. Paragraph 1 condemns the violence of 28 September 2000 and the following days at Al-Haram Al-Sharif and other holy places in Jerusalem and other areas in the occupied Palestinian territory, resulting in over 100 deaths, the vast majority Palestinian civilians, and many other casualties.

Paragraph 2 condemns acts of violence, especially the excessive use of force by the Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians. Paragraph 3 expresses support for the understanding reached at the summit convened at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, and urges all parties concerned to implement these understandings honestly and without delay.

In paragraph 4, the Assembly demands the immediate cessation of violence and use of force, calls upon the parties to act immediately to reverse all measures taken in this regard since 28 September and acknowledges that necessary steps have been taken by the parties in this direction since the Sharm el-Sheikh summit.

Paragraph 5 reiterates that the Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, are illegal and are an obstacle to peace, and calls for the prevention of illegal acts of violence by Israeli settlers.

Operative paragraph 6 demands that Israel, the occupying Power, abide scrupulously by its legal obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention, which is applicable to all territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

In operative paragraph 7, the Assembly strongly supports the establishment of a mechanism of inquiry into the recent tragic events, with the aim of establishing all the precise facts and preventing the repetition of these events, and in this regard the understanding reached at Sharm el-Sheikh on a committee of fact-finding, and calls for its establishment without delay.

Operative paragraph 8 supports the efforts of the Secretary-General, including his efforts for the establishment of the above committee, and requests him to report to the Assembly on the progress made in these efforts.

In operative paragraph 9, the Assembly calls upon the Members of the Security Council to closely follow the situation, including the implementation of resolution 1322 (2000), in fulfilment of the Council's primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Operative paragraph 10 invites the depository of the Fourth Geneva Convention to consult on the development of the humanitarian situation in the field, in accordance with the statement adopted on 15 July 1999 by the Conference of High Contracting Parties to the Convention, with the aim of ensuring respect for the Convention in all circumstances in accordance with common Article 1 of the four Conventions.

Operative paragraph 11 supports the efforts towards the resumption of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations within the Middle East peace process on its agreed basis, and calls for the speedy conclusion of the final settlement between the two parties.

In the last operative paragraph, 12, the Assembly decides to adjourn the tenth emergency special session temporarily and to authorize the President of the most current Assembly to resume its meeting upon request by Member States.

I will now deliver my final remarks in the Arabic language:

(*spoke in Arabic*)

Finally, I would like to apologize, on behalf of the sponsors of the draft resolution, for the delay in circulating the draft to delegates. As you all know, it has been subjected to long and hard negotiations that have taken place until the last minute in order to attain the largest balance acceptable to all regarding the language of the draft resolution. On this basis, we appeal to all Member States of the United Nations that respect human rights and that reject occupation and oppression, to declare their positions in support of those noble values by voting in favour of this draft resolution. We are confident that the Member States sponsoring the draft resolution will greatly appreciate every vote in support of the rights of the Palestinian people.

The President: Before we proceed further, I would like to consult the Assembly with a view to proceeding immediately to consider the draft resolution contained in document A/ES-10/L.6. In this connection, since document A/ES-10/L.6 has only just been circulated in the Hall, it would be necessary to waive the relevant provision of rule 78 of the rules of procedure.

The relevant provision of rule 78 reads as follows:

> "... As a general rule, no proposal shall be discussed or put to the vote at any meeting of the General Assembly unless copies of it have been

circulated to all delegations not later than the day preceding the meeting."

Unless I hear any objections, I shall take it that the Assembly agrees with this proposal.

It was so decided.

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolution A/ES-10/L.6.

Before giving the floor to the speaker in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Göktürk (Turkey): My delegation will vote for the draft resolution contained in document L.6. Turkey is profoundly concerned by the events that have unfolded since 28 September 2000 in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza, and deeply grieved by every life lost in the spiral of violence.

However difficult it may be, leadership on all sides requires the willpower to stay the course, the course towards lasting peace. The outcome of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit is the first step to getting out of the maze filled with passion and blood. We applaud the principles of the summit for what they have achieved. The summit understandings stand to be fully honoured. We must likewise heed the call of the United Nations Secretary-General to help lower the tension with the eventual aim of putting the peace process back on track.

What has transpired since the end of September must be proof enough for everyone that building on violence and the excessive use of force is no recipe for peace. All of the nations in the region are destined to live side by side. The choice is only about peaceful coexistence. This requires calm, moderation and a forward-looking spirit. Turkey is determined to play a role as a proponent and facilitator of peace.

The President: The Assembly will now take a decision on draft resolution A/ES-10/L.6.

A recorded vote has been requested.

A recorded vote was taken.

In favour:

Algeria, Andorra, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Belize, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Chile, China, Colombia, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, Ethiopia, Finland, France, Gambia, Ghana, Greece, Guinea, Guyana, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Ireland, Jamaica, Jordan, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkey, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe

Against:

Israel, Marshall Islands, Micronesia (Federated States of), Nauru, Tuvalu, United States of America

Abstaining:

Albania, Antigua and Barbuda, Australia, Barbados, Benin, Bulgaria, Cameroon, Canada, Costa Rica, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Germany, Grenada, Guatemala, Haiti, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Norway, Poland, Romania, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, San Marino, Sierra Leone, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Tonga, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland

Draft resolution A/ES-10/L.6 was adopted by 92 votes to 6, with 46 abstentions (resolution ES-10/7).

Subsequently the delegation of Belarus advised the Secretariat that it had intended to vote in favour.

The President: Before giving the floor to the first speaker in explanation of vote after the vote, may I

remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Samadi (Iran): My delegation voted in favour of the draft resolution contained in document A/ES-10/L.6. However, I wish to register the reservations of the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding any provisions of the resolution that imply the recognition of Israel.

Mr. Leviite (France) (*spoke in French*): For three weeks, the Middle East has been plunged into tragedy. More than 110 people have died, more than 3,000 have been wounded. But the hope for peace has not totally disappeared. The Sharm el-Sheikh summit is a witness to this, and in this regard I would like to pay tribute to the role played by the Secretary-General and to Presidents Clinton and Mubarak and King Abdullah II. I would also like to note the presence at that summit of the European Union, in the person Javier Solana.

The Sharm el-Sheikh agreement has to be applied. The recent news is worrisome: nine deaths today.

France, and with it the entire European Union, calls for the full and unconditional implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh summit decisions. This message is the principal message of the resolution that we have just adopted.

France, which currently holds the presidency of the European Union, has had the honour of negotiating this text in good faith with the Palestinian Ambassador, Nasser Al-Kidwa, and beyond that, with the Arab Group. The text that we have just adopted is, in the opinion of France, a good text. Unfortunately, after lengthy discussions, the 15 countries did not manage to speak in a single voice regarding this text, but the European Union is unanimous in its message: the cycle of violence must stop now. There must be a return to the situation that prevailed before 28 September. Reason and tolerance have to prevail once again over the forces of hatred. The hope for peace has to remain anchored in the hearts of all the men and women of the Middle East.

Mr. Mekdad (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): The delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic voted in favour of draft resolution A/ES-10/L.6, entitled "Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory". Our positive vote proceeds from our continuing support for the struggle of the Palestinian people against Israeli occupation, as well as our opposition to the continuing acts of aggression against that valiant people.

On the one hand, we would like to say that the resolution reflects many positive aspects pertaining to the role and responsibility of the United Nations in the question of Palestine, as well as in the need to provide protection for the Palestinian civilians in the occupied territory. We are also pleased that the resolution stresses that Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territory, including in Al-Quds Al-Sharif, are illegal, and that the resolution demands that Israel respect the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilian and military persons in time of war.

On the other hand, we would like to stress that we object to clauses in the resolution that equate the aggressor, Israel, with the victims, the Palestinians. Furthermore, the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic cannot agree to references in the resolution that do not clearly and unequivocally assign to Israel responsibility for the events in the occupied territory — although the world fully recognizes Israel's complete responsibility for the massacres taking place in the Palestinian territory.

My delegation would also like to register its reservations regarding references in the resolution to some understandings to which my delegation was not a party, as well as reservations regarding some agreements on which we have expressed our position in previous statements.

The Palestinian people have fallen victim to bloodthirsty Israeli policies. Any resolution that does not address the roots of the tragedy of Palestine and the requirements for a comprehensive peace and that does not call for an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people on the basis of the resolutions of international legitimacy cannot meet the expectations and demands of the international community for a just, comprehensive settlement in the Middle East.

Mr. Fonseca (Brazil) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am speaking on behalf of the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR). The countries of MERCOSUR — Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay and Uruguay — have voted in favour of the resolution in the belief that this resolution is going,

above all, to stimulate and reinforce the will of the parties to continue with the peace process. The events of today confirm the urgent need to create conditions so that the peace process can produce immediate results and so that the understandings reached at Sharm el-Sheikh will bear fruit as soon as possible.

Mr. Kolby (Norway): Norway abstained in the voting on the resolution. The violence that we have witnessed in the Palestinian territories for the past weeks has clearly illustrated what we all feared would be the alternative to the positive developments in the peace process.

Norway deeply regrets the loss of life and the suffering that have been caused. The Norwegian Government has welcomed the understanding reached in Sharm el-Sheikh, in which the parties have committed themselves to ending the violence and to resuming the negotiations on a final status agreement.

Norway strongly urges the effective implementation of this agreement. We support the establishment of a fact-finding mission, as agreed at Sharm el-Sheikh. Norway feels that the role of the international community at this stage should be to recreate an atmosphere of trust between the parties in which they can resume their trust in a lasting peace.

This being the case, we have chosen to abstain in the voting on the resolution, as, in our view, it contains elements that detract from what must be our primary concern at this point in time: an intensified search for a joint strategy to end the killing and proceed with the peace effort.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in exercise of the right of reply.

May I remind members that statements in exercise of the right of reply are limited to 10 minutes for the first intervention and to five minutes for the second and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Lancry (Israel) (*spoke in French*): At the outset, I wish to commend the remarkable statement made by the Secretary-General at the opening of this debate and to express our appreciation for his vision, moral authority, leadership and work for peace, animated by unparalleled inspiration. Mr. Annan was the architect of the recent Sharm el-Sheikh summit, a salutary opportunity to eschew confrontation and to move towards dialogue and the renewed logic of peace.

We also welcome the responsible and tireless efforts of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. His position yesterday at the summit of the League of Arab States, rejecting any attempt to promote armed conflict in order to silence belligerent voices by raising those of reason and dialogue, is a courageous stance on behalf of peace. Egypt and Mr. Mubarak have thus established themselves as significant factors in the creation of the necessary coexistence between Arab and Jew in the Middle East.

We also wish to express our full admiration for United States President Bill Clinton and for his incomparable investment, his generous presence and his unshakeable faith in a necessary and ineluctable peace between Israel and its regional Palestinian and Arab partners.

Allow me at this stage to make a few comments on this debate and to the resolution that has emerged from it. We have noted the recurrence of — indeed, the shrill insistence on — the notion of "occupied territories". I would stress first of all, not wishing to give any cause for apprehension, that ever since the signing of the Oslo accords the State of Israel has adhered by agreed modalities to a logic and policy of non-occupation, made concrete by territorial redeployments, which currently include almost half of the territories as a whole. We should also note, in order to defend and illustrate the steps Israel has taken for peace, that the bold policy of Prime Minister Barak — which was praised in this very Hall during the Millennium Assembly — strengthens the logic of territorial compromise with a scope that is as unprecedented as it is incomparably significant for achieving a final status that will be fair to all sides.

Faced with the overall process of Israeli occupation of territory, it should be urgently recalled that the occupation did not fall from the sky. It was the result of the strict cause and effect of the broad and concerted aggression of June 1967 aimed purely and simply at dislodging Israel. It should be added that, were it not for the emergence of the State of Israel in 1948 and for the failure of the attempt to annihilate it in 1967, other Powers than Israel would have imposed, if not occupation, then at least their presence and sovereign responsibility over those very territories. For memory's sake, we need to reiterate the telling fact that

it has only been under Israeli administration of these territories that the principle of territorial compromise with the Palestinians has emerged since Oslo.

My colleagues here need not take me at my word as to the following assessment, because I would cite at this particular juncture the illustrious late President of the French Republic, Mr. François Mitterand. I am even further motivated to recall his words because the magisterial and yet scandalously false lesson of history, geography and sociology promulgated here by one of our brilliant colleagues prompts me urgently to do so. On 20 May 1992, I had the signal privilege of presenting to President Mitterand my credentials as Israel's Ambassador to France. A 20-minute conversation ensued concerning the situation in Israel and the Middle East, in the course of which he said:

> "The territory that we customarily term 'occupied', I personally prefer to call 'disputed'. Yes, I recognize Israel's right to its philosophical and historical, if not military, arguments, so deeply are the historic rights of the Jewish people rooted in these territories where it emerged and flourished."

And yet, Mr. Mitterand concluded,

> "You have a problem. More than 2 million Palestinians are living there who have a right to their state structure. It is not up to me to decide their borders. That is to be settled between you and the Palestinians. I urge you to adopt that solution."

Steeped in biblical lore and exceptionally aware of the subtleties of the founding texts and of the historic journey of the Jewish people, François Mitterand could not ignore Israel's ancestral rights to what was Judea for many centuries. Moreover, beyond this modest personal testimony, Mr. Mitterand bequeathed to history, through numerous official documents and texts, his vision for the disputed territory.

It was at Camp David, after the historic turning point of Oslo and the political achievements it generated, that we prepared ourselves to engage in this wise and unavoidable dispute — the frank and resolute negotiation to lay the concrete foundations for a final status between us and the Palestinians, in which Mr. Mitterand and his direct successors might detect the outlines of his political philosophy.

Yes, we feel that Mr. Barak's Government took every possible risk, including its own political dissolution, so that there might be an end to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead of taking a genuine Palestinian decision commensurate with the aspirations of the Palestinian people, President Arafat chose to inflame the territories and to destabilize the region because of his inability to respond to history's invitation.

Rather than manage the future of a people within borders that have been definitively accepted and recognized, President Arafat has decided to join in the condemnation of Israel, ignoring one resolution after another and declining one summit after another. He should, however, be moving towards the summit of making history. Unfortunately, it is at this level that a real solution has just been missed.

As we have previously stated, we flatly reject the resolution resulting from this debate. In spite of certain moderators who have made sustained efforts to bring goodwill to the undertaking, this resolution embodies the arbitrary, the iniquitous and the biased, and it does not say anything about the savage killing of the two members of the Israeli military in Ramallah. The parade of shame, the bloody procession of the dead Israeli bodies mutilated in Ramallah, is not reflected in the resolution and evidently means little to its signers. There has also been silence as to the profanation of the Jewish Holy Places.

As we have said, this resolution is a certificate of respectability awarded to base instincts and the exacerbation of the situation. It certainly sends a negative message to the majority of the Israeli people who want openness and peace. It signals a major retreat in the dynamic of peace and sows major doubts as to the capacity of the Palestinians to be firm partners in peace and reconciliation. As such, due to its grave deficiencies, as well as the harmful malfunctioning which it introduces in Israeli-Palestinian relations, we categorically reject this resolution.

Certainly we do not remain indifferent with regard to the United Nations, with the measured voice and source of hope of Secretary-General Kofi Annan, and with his reserve, as well as that of a friend, the Permanent Representative of Morocco, representative of His Majesty Mohammed VI, the healthy resonance, noted as exemplary. All this shows the distance vis-à-vis the majority concerning this resolution.

We obviously thank those peace-loving Member States that have made the courageous choice to oppose, fully or through half-measures, this useless resolution.

Finally, in addition to our reservations regarding the defective procedures which have governed the convening of this special session, we regret not being able to adjourn at 6 p.m. in respect for the celebration of the Jewish festival of Sukkot and the holiness of the sabbath. Certain modalities which have been accepted for other faiths have not been made for the Israeli delegation. Let us take note of this fact as a regrettable affront to the sister faith of the two other monotheistic religions.

The President: We have now heard the right of reply. I give the floor to the Permanent Observer of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank the members of the General Assembly for staying so late on a Friday evening. I apologize to you, but I believe you all understand how serious the situation is. I would also like to thank all the speakers, beginning of course with the Secretary-General of the United Nations for all his important and positive efforts. I would also like to extend our sincere thanks to all the countries that co-sponsored the resolution we have just adopted, and naturally all the countries that voted in favour of the resolution.

We are proud that the great majority has supported this important resolution and are pleased that there were no objections to it other than the traditional objections that we have grown used to. There were 92 votes in favour. These votes carry much more weight than the sheer number they represent under normal circumstances. We have negotiated in good faith with a view to adopting a reasonable resolution that would reflect the position of the international community and would also gain more support. In this regard, we must extend our thanks to the presidency of the European Union for its efforts.

Unfortunately, it seems that the pressures were too high and too strong. Apparently, the attempts to hegemonize the Security Council were not enough, so now we see attempts to hegemonize the General Assembly. We have witnessed different kinds of pressure, including the use of the media. Regrettably, all that did not come at the appropriate time. For example, today 10 more martyrs have fallen in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem. Two of these martyrs were children under the age of 18. Another example is the holding of a summit of the League of Arab States tomorrow, which is of extreme importance.

We highly appreciate, and our people will remember, as will the Arab world, the principled position taken by those who voted in favour of the resolution. Our people and the Arab countries will watch with great concern the adoption of some countries of a position inconsistent with justice or international law or even with their traditional position.

Today's resolution is of great importance. First, it was adopted in an emergency special session of the General Assembly, and it determined a certain position with regard to the tragedy taking place in the occupied Palestinian territory, including Jerusalem, and the acts of violence and the excessive use of force by the Israeli forces against the Palestinian civilians.

Secondly, it provides the necessary support to the understandings achieved in Sharm el-Sheikh and the efforts of the Secretary-General, particularly with regard to the establishment of a commission of inquiry.

Thirdly, it provides adequate support to the peace process, its basis and the necessity of its resumption.

Fourthly, it establishes the legal framework for the situation on the ground as one of occupation.

Fifthly, it opens the door for more important moves such as continuing the negotiations between the parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention.

We strongly believe that this resolution will have a very important impact, particularly if Israel, the occupying power, realizes its disregard for the international will and listens to the clear position taken by the international community.

Naturally, we fervently hope that the current tragedy will come to an end, that the killing and wounding of our people will cease. We are trying our utmost to achieve that goal, including through the implementation of the Sharm el-Sheikh understandings.

Of course, if these bloody actions do not cease and if Israel persists in its bloody acts of oppression, we will again resort to the Assembly and call for a resumption of the tenth emergency special session.

Under what is called the right of reply, Mr. Lancry stated that the occupation did not fall from the sky. My question is, if it did not, why has it lasted for so many years and why has it become a colonialist occupation, characterized by the forced displacement of the population in order to annex the land?

International law and United Nations resolutions are very clear. This is occupied territory, Mr. Lancry. The land recognized as Israeli until now is the land that was allocated to the Jewish State in accordance with resolution 181 (II), the partition resolution. If there are territories in contention, they are the lands that Israel occupied in addition to the land allocated to the Jewish State in accordance with resolution 181 (II).

On our part, in spite of this, we have accepted Security Council resolution 242 (1967) as a basis for settlement. That resolution determines very clearly the occupied territory. For Israel to come now and undermine the basis of the settlement process and claim that these territories are in contention is a very grave development indeed.

We heard such claims from a former representative of Israel, Mr. Dore Gold, and we thought that we would now be listening to a representative of a different kind of Government. I should like to reiterate that what we have heard is extremely grave. It is tantamount to undermining the basis for a settlement, a rejection of Security Council resolution 242 (1967) and an insistence by Israel that territories occupied in 1967 are territories in contention. We very strongly condemn this.

If today's resolution had not been adopted, we would have requested that a reference to this be included in a draft resolution.

Lastly, I should like to reiterate our thanks to those who have supported us and say to those who did not that we understand; we look forward to their support on another occasion, in accordance with principles, international law and their traditional positions.

The President: The tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly is now temporarily adjourned, in accordance with the terms of paragraph 12 of the resolution adopted at the present meeting.

The meeting rose at 10.15 p.m.